



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

September 2000

# Strategic Plan for FY 2000-2005



USDA



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## I. Message from the Secretary

Born in the days of the Civil War, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) humble roots were as an agency established to provide seed and information to the men and women who grew the food of our young Nation. Today, while the heart of the Department remains production agriculture, USDA also leads a variety of related Federal efforts: the safety of the food we eat, the war on hunger in America and around the world, the fight for free and fair trade in the global economy, efforts to protect our natural resources – from farmland to forests, and the quest to ensure that America's rural communities are full participants in our Nation's economic opportunity.

This Plan shares with the American people USDA's strategies, goals, and resource needs as we work to address some of the most vital issues facing our Nation and the world in a new century. Back in 1862 when Abraham Lincoln founded USDA, the vast majority of Americans were farmers and ranchers. Today, less than 2 percent of us work to feed not only the rest of the country, but much of the world. Yet in the years to come, the work of the Department of Agriculture will only grow more important. In the following pages you will read about the challenges and opportunities USDA will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The questions we ask, the goals we set, the strategies we develop, and the resources we require are all aimed at answering some of the most important questions of our time:

- How do we feed a growing world in a sustainable way?
- How do we revive the viability and profitability of our farmers and ranchers?
- How can we produce food more safely, productively, and cost-effectively?
- How can we reduce world hunger and eradicate it here in the wealthiest Nation on earth?
- How can we balance the competing interests vying for use of our last open, pristine spaces?
- How do we manage and restore the natural resources entrusted to us?
- How can we transfer from the laboratory to America's eating habits what science now knows about the vital link between nutrition and overall health?
- How can we encourage free and fair trade to build a strong and stable global economy?
- How can we ensure that our country's economic good times are shared by all communities?

As a Federal department entrusted with America's tax dollars, there are other questions as well:

- How do we carry out our substantially 'upsized' duties with a dramatically 'downsized' staff?
- How do we best run a Department with employees across the country and around the world?
- How can we deliver maximum value to the taxpayers?
- How can we be a role model to companies and other government agencies on civil rights?
- How can we harness the Information Revolution to better serve our customers?
- How do we leverage limited resources through partnerships that enable us to deliver the greatest value for the tax dollar spent?
- How do we innovate and find new ways to solve old problems?

This Plan contains USDA's strategies for answering these questions. It explains the Department's goals, how our agencies plan to achieve them, and the resources necessary to do this important work well. As a living document that is intended to guide the Department's actions over the next 5 years, this Plan is designed for maximum staying

power and minimum bureaucracy. It represents the contributions, bright ideas, and innovative approaches that are so abundant among USDA's committed employees, partners, customers, and the Congress. It also is the first Plan in which an extensive effort was made to explain our work in "plain language," so the priorities and strategies included in this document are understood not only by veteran policymakers, but by all citizens.

This Plan offers an abundant amount of detail, as well as frequent references to resources that can provide additional information on specific topics. Further detail will be established through supporting USDA Annual Performance Plans that will address the specific annual resource needs required to successfully achieve this Plan. These resource needs will require congressional support and approval. Read on and you will find the requisite charts and statistics that represent the nuts and bolts of our strategies. You will also find the measures by which we expect to be held accountable for meeting the ambitious goals we have set. But all of these elements are part of one broad story. It is a story about a Federal department that has a profound and positive impact on the quality of life of every American every day.

This Plan represents the roadmap for how we will continue to address strategic objectives of deep and enduring significance to the Nation – safe, abundant, affordable food; sustainable natural resources; vibrant rural economies; a less hungry world. In this way, this Plan demonstrates that more than 130 years after its founding, USDA remains focused on the basic priorities of the American people. That is why we still go by the name given to us by President Lincoln. He called us and we still call ourselves "the people's department." We hope that in the following pages you get a more complete understanding of why.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Glickman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DAN GLICKMAN  
Secretary of Agriculture

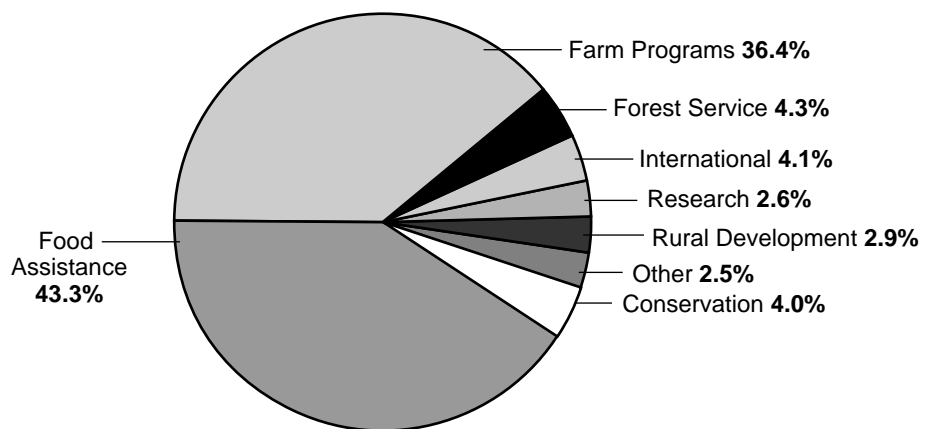
## II. "The People's Department"

When founding USDA in 1862, Abraham Lincoln called it "the people's department." In Lincoln's day, 90% of the "people" were farmers who needed good seed and good information to grow their crops. Today, with less than 2% of our Nation's population working the land, USDA serves not only farmers but also everyone who eats food, wears clothes, lives in a house, or visits a rural area or a National forest. The heart of the Department remains production agriculture, helping farmers feed America and the world in a sustainable way. But, USDA also:

- Leads the federal anti-hunger effort by providing food stamps to hungry families; school meals to children; and nutritious food and health referrals for pregnant women, new mothers, and their young children;
- Is the Nation's largest conservation agency – helping people protect soil, water, and wildlife on the 70% of land that is privately owned;
- Manages 192 million acres of America's forests and grasslands;
- Is the Federal Government's largest direct lender, providing loans to farmers and investors in rural America;
- Brings housing, telecommunications, safe drinking water, business opportunities, and other essential services to the Nation's rural communities;
- Ensures the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products;
- Safeguards America's animal and plant resources from invasive pests and diseases;
- Leads research on a range of topics, from human nutrition to new crop technologies that allow farmers to grow more food using fewer chemicals;
- Promotes open markets for U.S. agricultural products; and
- Provides food to needy people overseas.

### USDA Delivers a Variety of Services

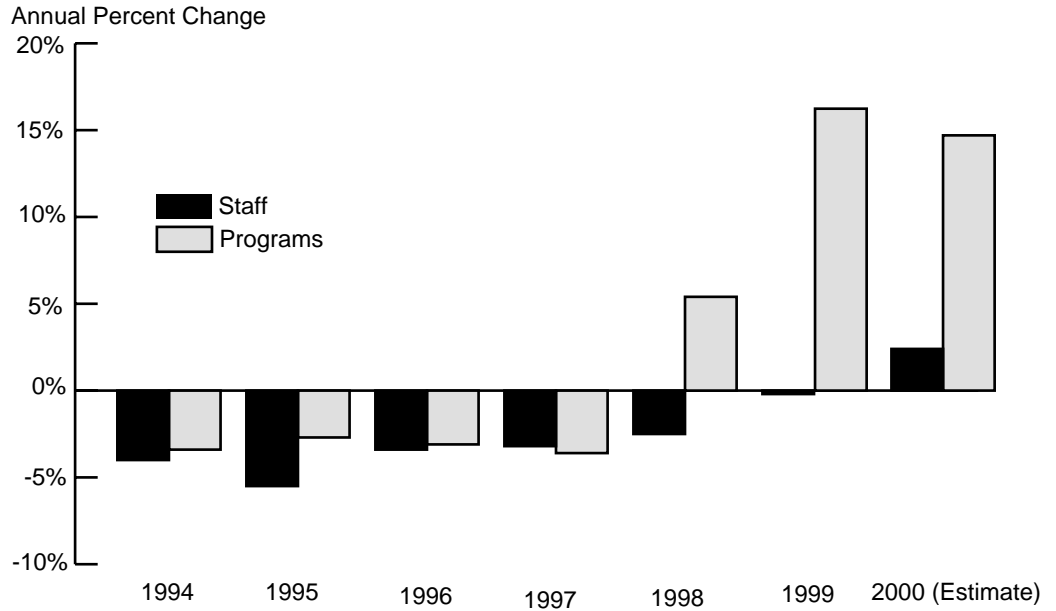
*While more than 30% of USDA's budget provides direct assistance to farmers, USDA also funds services that affect everyone who eats food or uses the land.*



FY 2000 Estimates Outlays \$78.6 Billion

Source: FY 2001 President's Budget.

### Annual Change in Staffing and Program Level



Source: President's Budgets 1996-2001.

A key challenge facing the Department in the years ahead will be effectively managing a dramatically wider scope of responsibilities and authorities with a far leaner staff that is more than 15% below the 1993 level. More than one in six Americans participate in programs sponsored by USDA. However, every American benefits from the Department's food safety, forestry, conservation, nutrition, research, and other functions that are vital to preserving and improving the American quality of life. As a result, USDA touches the lives of more Americans every day than any other agency in the Federal Government.

Appendix A describes in detail USDA's organizational structure and summarizes its authorizing legislation.



### III. Future Challenges and Opportunities

USDA's goals and strategies over the next 5 years reflect and anticipate changes and trends in the economy and society at large. Many forces shaped this plan. Specific themes such as the economic conditions facing farmers and rural Americans are addressed in the discussion of relevant goals. However, five recurring themes have an impact that cuts across many USDA objectives. In this Strategic Plan, USDA seeks to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that these broader forces present:

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**Market  
Globalization**

Growing international markets for U.S. food and fiber hold the promise of great gains for America's farmers, rural communities, timber producers, and consumers. But with these rewards come risks. Tight connections among the world's agricultural markets can result in greater volatility for U.S. farmers. The increasingly global nature of our Nation's food supply also raises the risk of imports carrying crop-destroying invasive species or foodborne pathogens. These challenges must be responsibly addressed in the years to come, and USDA must continue its efforts to ensure a free and fair global trading environment for agriculture. If it does, the globalization of agricultural markets promises substantial dividends – a greater ability to feed a growing world population, stronger economies around the world, and greater global stability. As a result, USDA's goals and strategies reflect a commitment to opening and expanding world markets while ensuring an abundant, safe, and affordable food supply.

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**Environmental  
Quality**

Increasing public awareness of the importance of the environment's health holds both opportunities and challenges for U.S. agriculture. Recent scientific discoveries provide new tools to help manage resources more sustainably. USDA programs offer technical and financial help to farmers who want to protect soil, air, water, and wildlife habitat. Producers also must comply with an increasing number of regulations issued by various authorities and often intended to achieve differing goals. Beyond agriculture, management of public lands also has grown more complex due to the increasing demand to balance differing visions of how our Nation's natural resources should be protected and/or used to support local economies. Many natural resource issues also have the added complexity of spanning international boundaries. This Strategic Plan addresses the increasing need for USDA leadership to ensure that policies and programs at all levels, that affect the environment and agriculture, are based on sound science and balance the need to conserve and sustainably use our Nation's natural resource base.

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**Technology**

The rapid pace of advances in technology will continue to change virtually every aspect of American life. Technology can yield great efficiencies in agricultural production and marketing and can provide disease-resistant crops and more nutritious foods. These advances, however, sometimes raise concerns about consumer health, the environment, and the future viability of small farming and ranching operations. Technology also can help rural businesses access the economic opportunities of a global marketplace, and enable USDA to address the management challenge of serving more customers with a smaller staff. But significant investment is needed to bridge the digital divide both in rural America and at USDA. This Strategic Plan anticipates that the Department will make steady progress in providing needed technology to its customers and employees and that USDA will continue to promote safe and effective agricultural technologies.

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***Diversity***

As our country grows more diverse, so does USDA's customer and employee base. This diversity brings with it a wealth of new ideas and resources. It also calls for greater efforts to ensure that programs and services reach all who need them and that USDA can attract and retain a diverse and talented team to serve all of its customers. Like American society as a whole, USDA has struggled to rectify and overcome a history of disparate treatment based on race, ethnicity, and gender. Building on the strong progress of recent years, USDA's strategy will reflect an unwavering commitment to providing fair and equitable service while treating every customer and employee with dignity and respect.

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***Discovery***

The success of U.S. agriculture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on continuing the proud record of cutting-edge research on which modern agriculture is built. The many discoveries that increased agricultural production and quality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are likely to be surpassed by new and more dramatic discoveries in the years to come. Biotechnology can help the world meet the challenge of global food security, holding the promise of foods that promote health and combat disease. The search for economically feasible and renewable fuel sources will create markets for agricultural products and reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. While these advances are underway, the possibilities remain vast for new discoveries not yet dreamed of that will open up promising avenues for agriculture and human health. This Strategic Plan reflects USDA's strong commitment to pushing the frontiers of scientific knowledge to solve today's problems and tap into tomorrow's opportunities.

## IV. Guiding Principles

In developing its long-term strategies and objectives, USDA relied on a set of guiding principles that cut across all of the Department's efforts and help define USDA's commitment to delivering the highest quality programs. These guiding principles are:

**Customer Service:** USDA is committed to close collaboration with its many customers, partners, and sister government agencies. All USDA employees are expected to treat all customers with fairness, dignity, and compassion. Every effort undertaken at USDA is driven by the goal of delivering quality service.

**Diversity:** USDA values and respects diversity, and works to empower all employees and customers. Employees strive for daily interpersonal relations that demonstrate USDA's stated commitment to civil rights and illustrate the fact that the Department's diversity ranks among its greatest assets.

**Work Excellence:** USDA values the positive, professional contributions of all employees. The Department provides opportunities for training and supports career and management development to empower all employees to maximize the contributions their talents make to the success of USDA endeavors.

**Fiscal Responsibility:** USDA is committed to managing all of its programs with the utmost financial integrity. The Department also works to leverage limited resources to deliver the greatest value per tax dollar spent.

**Innovation:** USDA is committed to harnessing the power of science and technology to strengthen agriculture, revive rural economies, improve nutrition and health, and reinvent the way it does business. Critical thinking, scientific knowledge, and practical application are hallmarks of USDA's work and decisions. Employees also are regularly encouraged and challenged to find new solutions to old problems. Department-wide efforts also are underway to use technology to enable a leaner USDA to continue expanding vital services to customers.

**Partnerships:** USDA works hard to forge alliances across public and private lines in pursuit of shared goals and to deliver complete solutions that are not limited by human boundaries, such as agency jurisdictions. Given the Department's rising responsibilities and decreased staff size, strong partnerships will be vital to the success of USDA's endeavors in the years to come.

**Fairness:** USDA strives to ensure that regulatory and other decisions are made sensibly and with consideration to the needs of all stakeholders. USDA decisions rely on sound science, put safety first, and seek to minimize the burden imposed by government regulations.

**Resource Stewardship:** USDA is committed to the conservation and sustainable use of our Nation's abundant natural resources to provide landowners, land users, communities, and tribes with the technical and financial assistance needed to help them keep America's working land working — now and in the future.



## V. The Strategic Planning Process

The USDA Strategic Plan shares with all Americans the strategies and goals of the Department over the next 5 years. It represents the culmination of a lengthy process involving countless USDA employees, customers, members of Congress, and other stakeholders. Together, we worked to develop this roadmap that details how the various USDA agencies will work together to achieve Department-wide objectives and the resources necessary to make their efforts a success. While this Plan takes the long view and is designed to have an enduring impact, it also is a living document that will be updated as changes in the farm economy, evolving National priorities, and other external factors demand.

This Strategic Plan represents a detailed exploration of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for U.S. agriculture, the Nation, and the world, as they relate to the work of USDA. As such, the Plan includes extensive information about the specific strategies, goals, and resource needs of the Department. It also is written to be understood not only by veteran policymakers, but by all interested Americans. While this Plan is meant to inform, rather than overwhelm, it does offer a series of appendixes and referrals to websites, reports, authorizing legislation, and other material that may be of interest to readers who require a greater level of detail on a specific topic.

While the body of this Plan is focused on the challenges, opportunities, strategies, and goals of the Department, the appendixes provide a great deal of valuable supporting material. They cover: the structure of USDA and an agency-by-agency breakdown of the Department's work; how USDA agencies partner with one another and with other Federal agencies to achieve strategic goals; the accuracy, reliability, and sources of the data used to set USDA's performance measures; how agency-level strategies and objectives support the broader Department goals; and, finally, the many advisory committees, public meetings, and other strategic consultations the Department has undergone and plans in the years ahead to ensure its strategies and objectives are in line with the needs and priorities of the American people and take into account the perspectives of all stakeholders to the Department's work.

Supporting this Department-wide Strategic Plan are agency-level strategic plans that offer even greater detail on specific topics, including the major management challenges facing many USDA mission areas. These agency-level plans include focused objectives and performance targets that keep USDA on pace to reach the broader goals laid out in this document. All USDA strategic plans are supplemented by annual performance plans that update the American public and the Congress on evolving strategies, priorities, and resource needs, as well as yearly performance reports that document recent progress toward the Department's long-term strategic goals. Combined, these Department-wide and agency-specific plans and annual reports form a mosaic of accountability for the Department.



## VI. Mission and Summary of Strategic Goals

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### **USDA's Mission**

To enhance the quality of life for the American people by supporting production agriculture; ensuring a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply; caring for public lands and helping people care for private lands; supporting sound sustainable development of rural communities; providing economic opportunities for farm and rural residents; expanding global markets for agricultural and forest products and services; and working to reduce hunger in America and throughout the world.

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### **Strategic Goals, Objectives and Key Outcome Measures**

#### **Goal 1**

#### **Expand economic and trade opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers.**

Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.

##### Key Outcome Measures:

Decrease the U.S. farm economy's dependence on government support by expanding market opportunities.

- Baseline: In 1999, farmers' total cash receipts from the sale of farm products were \$189 billion and 47% of net farm income was from direct Government payments.  
**Target: By 2005, total cash receipts from the sale of farm products will be \$221 billion and 14% of net farm income will come from direct Government payments.**
- Baseline: In 1999, 90.8% of gross cash farm income came from cash receipts and other non-Governmental farm income.  
**Target: By 2005, 96% of gross cash farm income will be generated from direct cash receipts and other non-Governmental farm income sources.**

Reduce the number and severity of pest and disease outbreaks in the U.S. over the next 5 years.

- Baseline: In 1999, 0 States met standards for state animal health emergency management systems (new program in 2000).  
**Target: By 2005, all States will meet standards for state animal health emergency management systems.**
- Baseline: In 1999, 95.8% of international air travelers complied with restrictions to prevent entry of pests and diseases.  
**Target: By 2005, increase compliance to 96% of air travelers while focusing on high-risk pathways.**

Improve fair, open, and competitive marketing over the next 5 years.

- Baseline: In 1998, 91% of anti-competitiveness violations under the Packers and Stockyards Act were corrected within a year of USDA's investigation.  
**Target: By 2005, 95% of the violations will be corrected within a year of investigation.**

Halt the disappearance of America's small farms.

- Baseline: In 1999, there were 2.2 million farms, 93% of which were considered small farms (\$250,000 or less in gross annual sales).  
**Target: By 2005, the number of farms, including small farms, will remain at or be higher than 1999 levels.**

Objective 1.2: Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture.

Key Outcome Measures:

Expand export opportunities for U.S. agriculture despite the increasing competitiveness of world markets.

- Baseline: In 1998, the U.S. had an 18.4% share of the global market for food and agricultural products.

***Target: By 2010, market share is expanded to 22.0%.***

Expand the market for bio-based products and bio-fuels over the next five years.

- Baseline: In 1999, only a negligible portion of U.S. demand for industrial products and fuels was bio-based.

***Target: By 2010, collaborating with the Department of Energy and other organizations, triple U.S. use of bio-based products and bio-fuels.***

**Goal 2:**

**Promote health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.**

Objective 2.1: Reduce hunger and improve nutrition among children and low-income people in the United States.

Key Outcome Measures:

Significantly improve food security for children and low-income people.

- Baseline: In 1998, 11.8% of households at or below 130% of poverty were “food insecure with hunger.”

***Target: By 2005, decrease to 7.9% – an approximate one-third reduction.***

- Baseline: In 1998, 9.7% percent of children in households at or below 185% of poverty were “food insecure with hunger.”

***Target: By 2005, reach 7.8% – an approximate 20% reduction.***

Increase the rates of eligible populations participating in the major Federal nutrition assistance programs.

- Baseline: In 1997, 63% of eligible individuals participated in the Food Stamp Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 68% — a 7.8% increase.***

- Baseline: In 1997, 87% of all individuals fully eligible for the WIC Program participated in the program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 90% — a 3.4% increase.***

- Baseline: In school year 1995-96, 51% of children enrolled in school participated in the National School Lunch Program.

***Target: By school year 2004-05, reach 55% — a 7.8% increase.***

- Baseline: In school year 1995-96, 13% of children enrolled in school participated in the School Breakfast Program.

***Target: By school year 2004-05, reach 18% — a 38.5% increase.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 3.9% of all children ages 0 to 18 years of age (inclusive) participated in Child and Adult Care Food Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 5.1% — a 33.3% increase.***

- Baseline: In 1997, 12% of free and reduced price eligibles participated in the Summer Food Service Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 17% — a 41.7% increase.***



Support real improvement in the diets of those served by USDA nutrition assistance programs.

- Baseline: In 1996, the average Healthy Eating Index (HEI) rating of people with incomes under 130% of poverty was 61 out of 100.  
**Target: By 2005, improve the rating to 66 out of 100 for this group.**
- Baseline: In 1996, the average HEI rating of children with incomes under 185% of poverty was 63 out of 100.  
**Target: By 2005, improve the rating to 68 out of 100 for this group.**
- Baseline: In 1998, 41% of WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding.  
**Target: By 2004, 50% of WIC mothers will initiate breastfeeding.**

Improve the nutritional quality of meals, food packages, commodities, and other program benefits.

- Baseline: In 1993, the National School Lunch Program meals provided 38% calories from total fat, 15% calories from saturated fat, and 33% of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for calories, vitamins, and minerals.  
**Target: By 2005, reach less than or equal to 30% calories from total fat and less than 10% calories from saturated fat; maintain calorie, vitamin and mineral content at greater than or equal to 33% of RDA.**
- Baseline: In 1993, School Breakfast Program meals provided 31% calories from total fat, 14% calories from saturated fat, 24% of the RDA for calories, and 25% of the RDA for vitamins and minerals.  
**Target: By 2005, reach less than or equal to 30% calories from total fat and less than 10% calories from saturated fat; increase calories to at least 25% of RDA; maintain vitamin and mineral level at greater than or equal to 25% of RDA.**
- Baseline: In 1996, 90% of Child and Adult Care Food Program meals met FNS meal pattern requirements.  
**Target: Through 2005 maintain 90%.**

Improve stewardship of Federal nutrition assistance program funding.

- Baseline: In 1998, the Food Stamp payment accuracy rate was 89.31%  
**Target: By 2005, increase to 90.8% – a 13.9% reduction in error.**
- Baseline: In 1997, 85.5% of school food authorities reported accurate meal counts.  
**Target: By 2005, increase to 90% – a 31.0% reduction in error.**
- Baseline: In 1997, free participation in the National School Lunch Program was 18% above the estimated number of eligible children.  
**Target: By 2005, decrease to 9% – a 50% reduction.**
- Baseline: In 1998, 68% of established Food Stamp Program claims were collected.  
**Target: By 2005, increase to 75% – a 10% increase.**

Objective 2.2: Reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world.

Key Outcome Measures:

Make a significant contribution to reducing world hunger and malnutrition.

- Baseline: In 1996, the United Nations estimated that 841 million people worldwide suffer from hunger.  
**Target: By 2005, working with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other organizations, reduce by 100 million the number of people in the world who suffer from hunger.**

Objective 2.3: Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of food-borne hazards.

Key Outcome Measures:

Reduce the prevalence of Salmonella on raw meat and poultry products.

- Baseline: In 1994, 20% of broiler chickens were found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

***Target: By 2005, reduce to 7.5% the prevalence of Salmonella on broiler chickens.***

- Baseline: In 1995, 8.7% of market hogs were found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

***Target: By 2005, reduce to 4% the prevalence of Salmonella on market hogs.***

- Baseline: In 1994, 7.5% of ground beef was found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

***Target: By 2005, reduce to 4% the presence of Salmonella in ground beef.***

Reduce the prevalence of Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products.

- Baseline: In 1998, 2.5% of samples of ready-to-eat products tested positive for Listeria monocytogenes.

***Target: By 2005, reduce by 50% the number of samples testing positive for Listeria monocytogenes.***

Objective 2.4: Improve public health through nutrition education, promotion, and research.

Key Outcome Measures:

Improve diets among the general public.

- Baseline: In 1996, the average HEI rating for the general public was 63.6 out of 100.

***Target: By 2005, improve this rating to 66 out of 100.***

### Goal 3:

### Maintain and enhance the Nation's natural resources and environment.

Objective 3.1: Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations.

Key Outcome Measures:

Maintain resource health and productive capacity.

- Baseline: In 1999, more than 800 million acres of the Nation's cropland, grazing lands, and private, non-industrial forestland needed conservation treatment to address resource problems threatening their quality and long-term sustainability of production.

***Target: By the end of FY 2005, an additional 240 million acres of cropland, grazing land, and private, non-industrial forestland will be managed under conservation systems that protect their quality and ensure long-term sustainability of production.***

Reduce erosion damage on cropland.

- Baseline: In 1997, preliminary data indicates that 112 million acres of cropland were eroding at rates that, if continued, will reduce the quality and productive capacity of the soil.

***Target: In 2005, the acreage of cropland eroding at damaging rates will be reduced to 95 million acres.***

Reduce risk of fire.

- Baseline: 67 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands today face extreme risk of fire-related losses.

***Target: In 2006, reduce the proportion of acres in short-interval, fire-adapted ecosystems at moderate and high risk compared to acres at low risk by 20%.***

Objective 3.2: Protect the quality of the environment.

Key Outcome Measures:

Protect water quality and watershed health.

- Baseline: In 1999, an estimated 272,600 animal feeding operations may need assistance from USDA to design and implement comprehensive nutrient management plans.

***Target: By 2009, these animal feeding operations will have comprehensive nutrient management plans developed or implemented.***

- Baseline: By 1999, almost 2.6 million acres of conservation buffers were installed by landowners to protect waterways.

***Target: By 2005, an additional 2.8 million acres of buffers will be installed to government standards to help reduce the movement of pollutants into America's water and air.***

- Baseline: USDA is currently establishing methods to monitor and classify watershed health.

***Target: By 2006, there will be a 20% increase in the number of restored or improved rangeland and forestland watersheds.***

- Baseline: Complete information does not exist on selected wildlife and plant populations that are indicators of the success of USDA's stewardship efforts and the overall health of the Nation's environment.

***Target: By 2001, track populations of selected wildlife and plant species on National Forests and Grasslands to gauge the effectiveness of USDA efforts and to gain a greater understanding of the overall health of the Nation's environment. By 2006, improve trends for selected wildlife and plant populations.***

Enhance urban environments.

- Baseline: In 1999, percentage of urban areas with forest cover and green space was 27.1%.

***Target: By 2006, attain a 5% increase in forest cover and green space in urban areas.***

Maintain wetlands values.

- Baseline: By 1992, the Nation's wetlands had been reduced to slightly more than 156 million acres. Between 1992 and 1997 the loss of wetlands continued, though at a slower rate than earlier.

***Target: By 2005, no net loss of wetlands on agricultural lands.***

Clean up contaminated sites on USDA-managed facilities and lands and restore affected ecosystems and watersheds.

- Baseline: In 1998, USDA had over 2,000 sites contaminated from the release of hazardous materials.

***Target: By 2006, complete the cleanup on 10% of the USDA-managed facilities and lands that have been contaminated by hazardous materials.***

Objective 3.3: Provide multiple benefits to people from the Nation's natural resources.

Key Outcome Measures:

Provide sustainable production levels of the wide variety of goods and services being provided by the National Forests and Grasslands.

- Baseline: There currently are significant gaps in the data necessary to set long-term performance measures related to providing multiple benefits to people from the National Forests and Grasslands.

***Target: In 2001, establish baseline data for the range of goods and services provided by the National Forests and Grasslands. By 2006, determine sustainable production levels, based on timely and valid scientific data.***

Improve the satisfaction of visitors to National Forests and Grasslands.

- Baseline: In 1999, user satisfaction with recreation programs and facilities was 84%.

***Target: By 2006, attain a 5% increase in user satisfaction.***

Benefits from watershed protection infrastructures are maintained.

- Baseline: Nearly 2,000 small watershed areas that cover a total of 140 million acres have been developed to help prevent flooding, protect lives and property, and provide benefits of water supply and recreational opportunities. Continuation of these benefits depends on rehabilitation of the small earthen dams that are a central feature of the watershed management infrastructure. Of these dams, 2,200 urgently need attention.

***Target: By 2010, rehabilitation will be completed on 2,200 dams.***

## Goal 4:

### **Enhance the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper.**

Objective 4.1: Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.

Key Outcome Measures:

Create or save jobs in rural areas.

- Baseline: In 1999, nonmetro unemployment was 4.4%, which was 0.2% higher than metro unemployment.

***Target: By 2005, the spread between nonmetro and metro unemployment will be cut in half.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 74,379 jobs were created or saved through USDA financing of businesses in rural areas.

***Target: By 2005, create or save 93,000 rural jobs.***

Increase homeownership in rural areas.

- Baseline: In 1999, 75.4% of rural residents owned their home.

***Target: By 2005, homeownership among rural residents will be 76%.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 55,941 rural residents received USDA financial assistance to purchase a home of their own.

***Target: By 2005, provide credit for a home purchase to 68,000 rural residents.***

Provide safe drinking water to rural residents.

- Baseline: In 1997, 7% of rural households had drinking water reported as not safe to drink.

***Target: By 2005, the percentage of rural households with unsafe drinking water will be reduced to 6.5%.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 748,000 rural people were connected to public water for the first time.

***Target: By 2005, connect 843,000 rural people to public water for the first time.***

Objective 4.2: Ensure the neediest rural residents and communities have equal access to the USDA programs that will help them succeed.

Key Outcome Measures:

Assist the neediest rural communities.

- Baseline: In 1999, 612 assisted communities successfully applied for non-USDA financial assistance.

***Target: In 2005, the number of communities assisted with non-USDA financial assistance will be 800.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 247 communities located in persistent-poverty rural counties received financial assistance to establish or improve a system for drinking water or waste disposal.

***Target: In 2005, the number of communities assisted in persistent-poverty counties will be 278.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 72 cooperatives serving persistent-poverty counties received financial assistance to establish or improve local electric service.

***Target: In 2005, the number of cooperatives assisted in persistent-poverty counties will be maintained.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 83 cooperatives serving the 700 counties experiencing out-migration received financial assistance to establish or improve local electric service.

***Target: In 2005, the number of cooperatives assisted in counties experiencing out-migration will be maintained.***

**Goal 5: Operate an efficient, effective, and discrimination-free organization.**

Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees.

Key Outcome Measures:

Conduct civil rights impact analyses of all USDA regulations to assess impacts on underserved customers.

- Baseline: In 2000, civil rights impact analyses were conducted on new regulations or as current regulations were submitted for amendment.

***Target: Maintain 100% civil rights impact analyses on all new regulations and amended USDA regulations.***

Provide full and equal access to USDA programs in a discrimination-free environment.

- Baseline: In 2000, 20% of USDA programs underwent civil rights compliance reviews.

***Target: Every major USDA program is reviewed no less than every 5 years.***

Establish in every agency effective outreach programs that target underserved customers.

- Baseline: In 1999, each USDA agency created a plan to reach out to underserved customers.

***Target: In 2001 and future years, each agency will have acted on its outreach plan and experienced an improvement in minority participation in USDA programs.***

***The target will be maintained every year through FY 2005.***

Ensure timely resolution of program and equal employment civil rights complaints.

- Baseline: In 1998, processing times were 243 days for program complaints and 348 days for employment complaints.

***Target: By 2001, reduce processing time every year for both program and employment complaints to less than 180 days by FY 2005.***

Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.

Key Outcome Measures:

USDA will have the information systems needed to allow customers to securely and confidently share data and receive services electronically.

- Baseline: Although USDA agencies currently make many documents available online, customers, for the most part, cannot file or submit information to USDA electronically.

***Target: USDA will have a secure electronic filing and retrieval system for the Risk Management Agency (by the end of 2001) and the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development (by the end of 2002) that will enable customers to file all required paperwork electronically and access all current publications over the Internet. All USDA agencies will make products and services available online, as practicable, by the end of 2003.***

USDA will have a financial information system that can produce auditable financial statements and provide reliable and useful information for decision-making.

- Baseline: In 1999, the Department could not provide a set of financial statements that passed the scrutiny of an independent audit, meaning its financial data systems could not provide reliable data for decision-making.

***Target: In 2003, the Department will receive a clean audit of its financial statements and have a financial information system in place to provide reliable and useful information for decision-making.***

USDA will have a skilled, satisfied workforce and strong prospects for retention of its best employees.

- Baseline: In 1999, 63% of USDA employees said that they were satisfied with their work – which is 3% higher than the National Partnership for Reinventing Government average and 1% higher than private industry.

***Target: By 2005, the percentage of USDA employees who say they are satisfied with their work will be 8 percentage points over the then current Government-wide average.***

USDA will have a facilities environmental management system that can produce reliable data on our environmental performance.

- Baseline: In 1999, internal USDA facility inspections and program reviews did not produce consistent data on environmental performance.

***Target: By 2003, all USDA agencies will implement environmental management systems and publish reliable reports on the environmental performance of their facilities and programs.***





## VII. Strategic Goals and Objectives

### **Goal 1: Expand economic and trade opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers.**

The landscape for U.S. farmers and ranchers is being rapidly transformed by a number of convergent forces, such as quick changes in biological and information technology, environmental and conservation concerns, greater threats of agricultural pests and diseases spreading across continents, and the recent spate of natural disasters. U.S. producers also are deeply affected by the continuing industrialization of agriculture and globalization of its markets.

These trends, coupled with recent dramatic changes in Federal farm policy and ongoing efforts to curtail Federal budget outlays, make creative solutions necessary if USDA is to ensure the long-term viability and profitability of U.S. agriculture. The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 completely overhauled 60 years of National farm policy, placing a greater emphasis on conservation and increased planting flexibility for farmers. However, it also left U.S. farmers and ranchers with an inadequate safety net, which has led to devastating economic consequences in many parts of the country, as farmers and ranchers are buffeted by destructive forces beyond their control – from powerful storms to weak markets. Without a strong farm safety net, America's family farms may soon be a relic of the past, and the future viability of agriculture in a land ripe with abundant soil and a beneficial climate may ultimately be called into question.

Recognizing the importance of a strong farm safety net, President Clinton signed into law the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000. This important legislation makes commercial insurance more affordable to farmers, including those who suffer multi-year losses. This legislation also redoubles USDA's efforts to develop new and effective risk management tools by expanding research and development and reviewing existing insurance products.

Access to global markets also continues to be a major component of the farm safety net and a significant contributor to the U.S. economy. Every \$1 billion in U.S. agricultural exports supports 15,200 U.S. jobs, and generates more than \$1.25 billion in additional domestic economic activity. Two-thirds of the jobs supported by farm exports are located in urban and suburban areas due to the many steps – processing, packaging, storage, and transport – required to move products from the farm to the export market. While agricultural trade presents tremendous opportunities to the U.S. farm economy, global competitiveness will grow much more intense in the years to come. Achieving a level playing field for global agricultural trade must be a high priority for USDA in order to protect this vital component of the farm safety net.

### **Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.**

Maintaining profitable operations is the only avenue to running a successful farm or ranch. While factors such as market conditions, weather, and plant and animal diseases can play an important role, the efficiency of a farm's production system largely determines whether the operation will be economically viable. For this reason, helping farmers and ranchers increase the profitability of their operations and decrease the dependence on government assistance is a primary USDA objective.

In difficult times, USDA must provide an effective, efficient farm safety net to protect the men and women who feed this country and much of the world. Today, the primary components of the safety net are farm loans and other forms of income support, as well as crop insurance and other risk management tools designed to help mitigate the inherent risks of

farming that are outside an individual producer's control. Tomorrow's farm safety net must also include a broader range of activities, from increasing the efficiency and sustainability of farming and ranching operations to protecting U.S. agriculture from invasive species and diseases that can threaten regional farm economies.

USDA marshals the resources and expertise of many agencies in order to fulfill this vital function. The Farm Service Agency; the Risk Management Agency; the Natural Resources Conservation Service; the Agricultural Research Service; the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; the Economic Research Service; the National Agricultural Statistics Service; and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are the principal USDA agencies leading these efforts.

USDA provides:

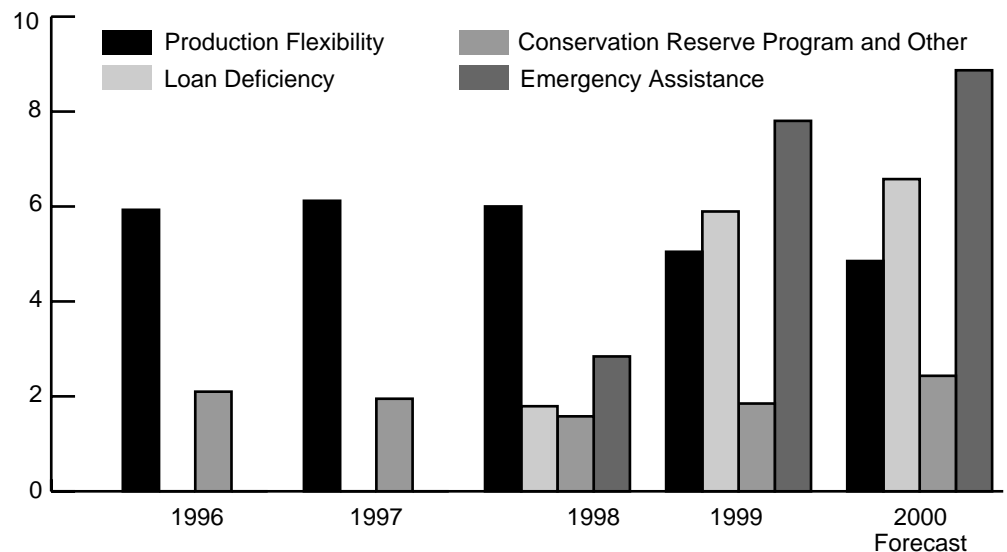
- Loans to farmers who are temporarily unable to obtain private, commercial credit.
- Farm income support programs, including: production flexibility contracts, which are fixed income support programs based on a farm's historical acreage and yields; marketing assistance loans, which provide interim financing to farmers at harvest time, so they are not forced to sell in a weak market; and loan deficiency payments, which enable farmers to forgo loans during periods of low prices in exchange for a cash payment.
- Crop and revenue insurance programs, delivered by commercial insurers, to protect farmers from circumstances beyond their control, such as weak markets or natural disasters.
- Conservation programs that: pay farmers to idle fragile acres; pay added incentives for high-value conservation activities; and provide cost-share assistance to improve soil, water, and wildlife resources.
- Emergency programs that help cover losses and damage resulting from a natural disaster.
- Research, technical assistance, and extension programs that help farmers and ranchers adopt technologies and practices that reduce production costs, improve efficiency and crop yields, and boost their bottom line.
- Animal and plant health protection programs to minimize production losses and maintain market viability.

In recent years, it has become apparent that the Federal farm safety net must be strengthened. Recent low commodity prices and a spate of natural disasters have forced Congress to supplement the existing safety net with record levels of emergency assistance. While this ad-hoc spending helped many farmers stay in business, it highlighted major weaknesses in the farm safety net that call for bold action and pioneering approaches to ensure that hard-working farmers and ranchers have a sturdy income that gives them both the ability and the incentive to continue providing the Nation and the world with affordable, safe, and nutritious food. For this reason, USDA will continue to develop innovative solutions to provide U.S. producers a comprehensive and cost-effective system to protect their long-term economic viability and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy (see chart).

## A Rising Dependence on Ad-hoc Government Payments

*The lack of a strong safety net has led to the farm economy's increasing reliance on USDA assistance in recent years.*

Billions \$



Source: Farm Service Agency, 2000.

Of special concern to the Department is the decline in the number of farms, and the increasing trend towards larger farms. According to the Census of Agriculture, over the last decade, the number of the Nation's farms has declined by almost 200,000, most of them small farms. While 92% of the Nation's farms are small farms, they account for only 39% of the farm economy. USDA recognizes the economic and social value of preserving diversity in agricultural structure and opportunities for future generations. USDA policies and programs will demonstrate a balance between achieving economic efficiency and profitability, and preserving the contributions of small farms.

### Key Outcome Measures:

Decrease the U.S. farm economy's dependence on government support by expanding market opportunities.

- Baseline: In 1999, farmers' total cash receipts from the sale of farm products were \$189 billion and 47% of net farm income was from direct Government payments.  
**Target: By 2005, total cash receipts from the sale of farm products will be \$221 billion and 14% of net farm income will come from direct Government payments.**
- Baseline: In 1999, 90.8% of gross cash farm income came from cash receipts and other non-governmental farm income.  
**Target: By 2005, 96% of gross cash farm income will be generated from direct cash receipts and other non-governmental farm income sources.**

Reduce the number and severity of pest and disease outbreaks in the U.S. over the next 5 years.

- Baseline: In 1999, 0 States met standards for state animal health emergency management systems (new program in 2000).  
**Target: By 2005, all States will meet standards for state animal health emergency management systems.**

- Baseline: In 1999, 95.8% of international air travelers complied with restrictions to prevent entry of pests and diseases.  
**Target: By 2005, increase compliance to 96% of air travelers while focusing on high-risk pathways.**

Improve fair, open and competitive marketing<sup>1</sup> over the next 5 years.

- Baseline: In 1998, 91% of anti-competitiveness violations under the Packers and Stockyards Act were corrected within a year of USDA's investigation.  
**Target: By 2005, 95% of the violations will be corrected within a year of investigation.**

Halt the disappearance of America's small farms.

- Baseline: In 1999, there were 2.2 million farms, 93% of which were considered small farms (\$250,000 or less in gross annual sales).  
**Target: By 2005, the number of farms, including small farms, will remain at or be higher than 1999 levels.**

### **Long-term Strategies:**

- Provide increased incentives for farmers to purchase adequate amounts of crop loss and revenue insurance, and reduce reliance on ad-hoc disaster relief.
- Develop new insurance products that will better assist the Nation's farmers in difficult times.
- Pursue legislation to provide supplementary income assistance to help producers survive down markets.
- Provide financial incentives, such as the President's Farm Conservation Initiative, to reward producers who practice good stewardship and help ensure the viability of family farms.
- Assess the feasibility of alternative modes of income support to farmers and ranchers.
- Improve outreach and credit assistance to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- Develop tools to promote the long-term stability and financial integrity of high-risk farm loan programs and ensure that producers have access to the credit they need to purchase, maintain, and improve their operations.
- Develop timely disaster assistance programs to help producers recover from and mitigate future disasters.
- Increase the involvement of public and private groups in developing and running risk management programs.
- Reach more underserved producers with risk management education products and services.
- Ensure that Federal farm policies recognize and respond to the needs of small farmers and strengthen the competitive position of small farms in American agriculture.
- Strengthen pest and disease exclusion and detection through international cooperation, effective research education and inspection programs, and the use of advanced information and detection technologies.
- Conduct cooperative programs to control or eradicate regional and National agricultural health problems.
- Develop and share with producers new methods to attain more economically sustainable operations.
- Improve understanding of the benefits of new approaches to promoting long-term farm income stability.

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<sup>1</sup> Addresses anti-competitiveness violations of the Packers and Stockyards Act related to an existing market. The principal purpose of the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 is to ensure integrity of livestock, meat, and poultry markets and the marketplace. This includes fostering fair and open competition, and guarding against deceptive and fraudulent practices affecting the movement and price of meat animals and their products.

- Develop science-based information technologies and practices needed to achieve profitable and sustainable production systems.
- Conduct research and analysis to determine the impact of structural changes in agriculture on farm income and agriculture and resource policy.
- Provide timely and accurate agricultural statistics and analysis, so producers can make informed production and marketing decisions and policy makers can make well-informed decisions.
- Strengthen actions to identify and reduce anti-competitive practices in the livestock, meat, and poultry industries.
- Through research, develop and use biotechnology to increase food and fiber production at less expense to the environment.
- Ensure that biotechnology products are safe.
- Through research, expand the knowledge base needed to improve agricultural productivity and the marketability of agricultural products.

***Resource Needs:***

Investments in information technologies and in training are necessary to maximize USDA's ability to contribute to a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.

***Key External Factors:***

Many factors may impact USDA's ability to promote long-term income stability for farmers and ranchers. Continued low commodity prices, as a result of abundant global food and fiber supplies, budget constraints, and adverse weather net all have a destabilizing effect on the farm economy. Major legislative changes to farm income support programs, likely to occur in 2002, represent a significant opportunity to improve the farm safety net. Also, emerging animal and plant health issues, including potential acts of bio-terrorism, could impact stability in the farm economy in the years to come.

**Objective 1.2:**

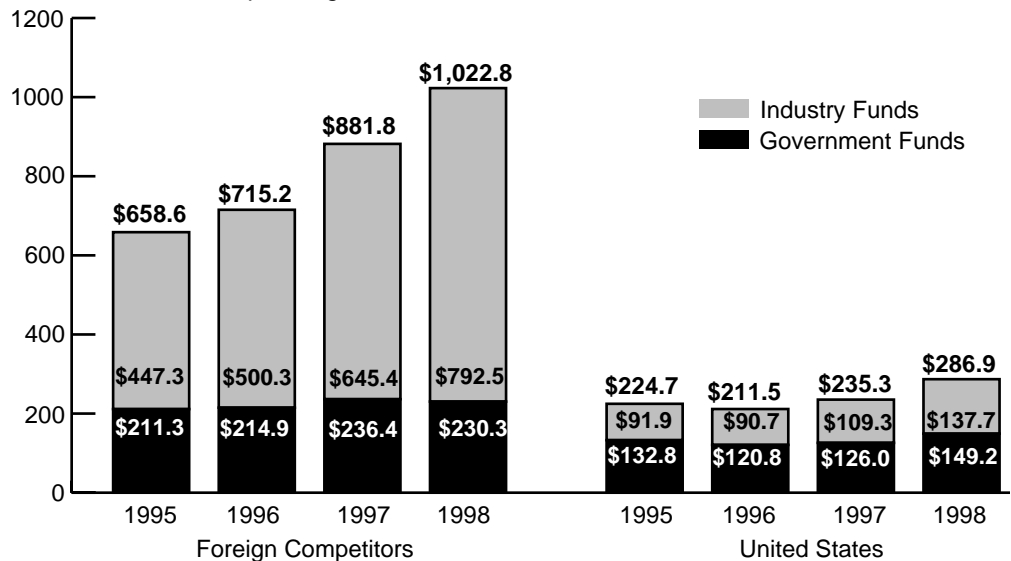
**Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture.**

Expanding market opportunities, both at home and abroad, for U.S. agriculture is central to USDA's goal of improving the economic livelihood of farmers and ranchers. At home, USDA will work in conjunction with the Department of Energy and other organizations to expand markets for bio-based products and create more opportunities for direct marketing that keeps a greater share of the consumer's dollar on the farm. Given that 96% of American agriculture's potential customers reside outside the Nation's borders, international trade presents an immense opportunity to strengthen the U.S. farm economy. Yet in recent years, global agricultural markets have grown far more competitive, eating away at U.S. agriculture's market share and making clear the need for more investment – from government and the private sector – to expand American agriculture's opportunities abroad. For example, market promotion activities are not barred by international trading rules. As a result, U.S. competitors have dramatically outspent the United States on this key battleground for tomorrow's markets (see chart).

## Competitors Outspend U.S. 3:1 on Ag Market Promotion

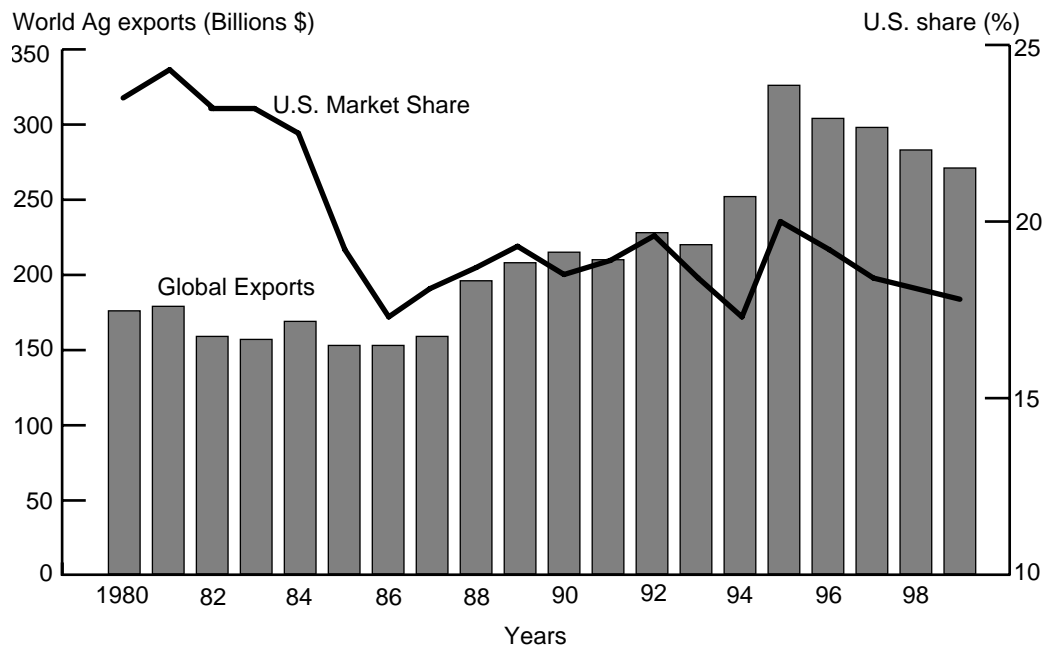
*As competitors invest more to promote their farm products, U.S. spending remains flat and our global market share erodes.*

Market Promotion Spending (Millions \$)



Source: FAS survey, biannually.

## U.S. Share of World Agricultural Trade



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census and United Nations Database.

Negotiations to liberalize international agricultural trading rules and practices provide another important avenue for expanding access to overseas markets. USDA currently is working closely with the U.S. Trade Representative's Office to achieve trade reforms that will ensure fairness and improve access to global markets for U.S. farmers and ranchers. Under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, a new round of multilateral negotiations on agricultural trade began in March 2000. U.S. objectives for these negotiations include the elimination of export subsidies, greater limitations on trade-distorting domestic supports, substantial reductions in all import tariffs and increases in tariff-rate quotas, disciplines on state trading enterprises, and rules to ensure market access for products of new technologies. Negotiations also are continuing to establish a Free Trade Area of the Americas, with a target for their conclusion by the end of 2005. Among other things, the agricultural objectives for these negotiations include the elimination of export subsidies that affect trade in the Western Hemisphere.

USDA plays a prominent role in improving the domestic marketing of agricultural products. While U.S. farmers have the world's most efficient production, they can benefit from more aggressively marketing their products. USDA helps producers learn strategic marketing. The Department is working to make the playing field level in the U.S., providing critical market data to producers to inform their selling and marketing decisions. In addition, USDA provides protections to producers selling highly perishable commodities. Strategic marketing means identifying the customers and tailoring food and fiber products to satisfy their needs. It is a proactive process going far beyond the traditional 'one-size-fits-all' approach that assumes all customers are alike. Today's consumers want adequate supplies and low prices; but they also value food that is wholesome and safe, and labeling that clearly communicates a consistent message – whether the product is organic, nutritious, or underwent a rigorous quality control process. USDA works to help producers and processors learn how to respond to new consumer demands, and seize more opportunities to grow the farm economy and farmers' and ranchers' bottom line.

To enhance American agriculture's economic opportunities, USDA will develop a global long-range marketing plan that enlists both its vast network of domestic field offices and its 80 foreign field offices in an unprecedented effort to expand market opportunities for U.S. producers. USDA will incorporate into this effort strategies that take advantage of new products resulting from recent advances in agricultural technology. Once fully operational, this worldwide marketing effort will enable USDA to leverage its global resources to help U.S. farmers and ranchers take full advantage of opportunities wherever they exist around the globe.

### **Key Outcome Measures:**

Expand export opportunities for U.S. agriculture despite the increasing competitiveness of world markets.

- Baseline: In 1998, the U.S. had an 18.4% share of the global market for food and agricultural products.

**Target: By 2010, market share is expanded to 22.0%.**

Expand the market for bio-based products and bio-fuels over the next 5 years.

- Baseline: In 1999, only a negligible portion of U.S. demand for industrial products and fuels was bio-based.

**Target: By 2010, collaborating with the Department of Energy and other organizations, triple U.S. use of bio-based products and bio-fuels.**

***Long-term Strategies:***

- Promote U.S. products domestically through farmers markets and research to improve direct marketing.
- Assist limited-resource, women-owned, and minority-owned farms in direct marketing efforts.
- Develop educational programs for U.S. producers, processors, and exporters to strengthen their marketing knowledge and skills, including "Learn how to export your product" workshops.
- Partner with private U.S. market development groups to leverage resources aimed at capturing market opportunities abroad for U.S. food and agricultural products.
- Expand U.S. access to foreign markets through active participation in the World Trade Organization and other international forums.
- Conduct research to support the development and marketing of bio-based products and bio-fuels to expanding the range of agricultural products in the marketplace.
- Research and develop international standards and new technologies and processes to reduce non-tariff trade and quarantine barriers to U.S. agricultural exports caused by pests, diseases, or chemical residues.
- Develop streamlined grain inspection and weighing processes.
- Educate the world agricultural industry and other governments about U. S. grain standards.
- Collect and disseminate time-sensitive agricultural market information for domestic and foreign markets.
- Provide cost-effective voluntary agricultural commodity quality grading/certification services to enhance price returns for commodities sold.
- Put in place National organic production and labeling standards, and an accreditation and certification program for organic foods.
- Develop and provide technical assistance to increase farm-gate income by expanding wholesale, farmer, and direct marketing opportunities.

***Resource Needs:***

Investments in information technologies and in training are necessary to maximize USDA's ability to expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture. It also will be necessary to provide adequate levels and program resources if USDA is to accomplish its goal of expanding U.S. agriculture's global market share. The Department's Annual Performance Plan will specifically address annual resource needs.

***Key External Factors:***

Several factors may affect USDA's ability to expand marketing opportunities for U.S. producers. These include: budgetary constraints; adverse weather and crop conditions; the trade barriers of foreign countries; and trade promotion and marketing practices of foreign competitors. Potential reductions in resources of other Federal agencies, multilateral institutions, and/or private sector organizations with which USDA works also could have a profound impact on the Department's ability to expand U.S. agricultural exports.



**Goal: 2****Promote health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.**

Because of its duties fighting hunger, promoting health through nutrition, and ensuring the safety of the food on every American's table, USDA makes a deep and positive impact on the life of every American every day. USDA works hard to ensure that America's agricultural abundance, and the latest science and technology, work together to support the nutrition and health of people in the United States and around the world. Through its wide array of food assistance, food safety, and nutrition research and education programs, USDA is a world leader in the safety of our food, the fight against hunger, as well as efforts to improve public health through nutrition.

Despite the Nation's agricultural abundance and wealth, nearly 3 million U.S. children live in households that battle with hunger. Through food stamps, school meals, pre-natal nutrition assistance, and other efforts, USDA is the Federal anti-hunger department. It partners with public and private groups to pursue a broad anti-hunger strategy – from increased purchasing power through Food Stamps to make a healthful diet affordable to all, to targeted benefits that meet special needs. USDA will seek to fight hunger and improve nutrition for children and low-income people by increasing the rate of participation by eligible people in nutrition assistance programs, and by improving the nutritional content of food packages and school meals. The Department also plays a leading role in the international war on hunger, through efforts ranging from direct commodity donations to advocating policies that promote global economic and food security. These efforts must be strengthened in the years to come. Despite America's prosperity and worldwide economic development, hunger will persist among those left behind, unless the U.S. plays a leading role in its reduction around the globe.

USDA is a leader in the Nation's food safety efforts. Working in partnership with other Federal food safety agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency, USDA is building a seamless and science-based National system to ensure food safety from farm-to-table and reduce by 25% over the next 5 years the incidence of foodborne illness in the United States. While America has one of the safest food supplies in the world, still today more than 5,000 people die in this country every year from foodborne illnesses. The transition in recent years to a science-based food safety regulatory system promises dramatic improvements in the safety of America's food. Through stronger coordination with other government food safety agencies and greater investments in scientific advancements and knowledge, USDA is poised to make tremendous progress on this vital public health issue.

USDA also makes a dramatic contribution to America's health through nutrition education and research. While recent scientific advances have strengthened our understanding of the powerful link between nutrition and health, only 12% of Americans regularly eat a healthy diet. The challenge moving forward is not only to expand the body of scientific knowledge in this important public health area, but also to encourage the American people to apply this knowledge in their daily lives. Through nutrition education, partnerships with America's schools, and policy guidance to State and local government agencies, USDA will work to help more Americans understand that there is some truth to the saying, "you are what you eat."

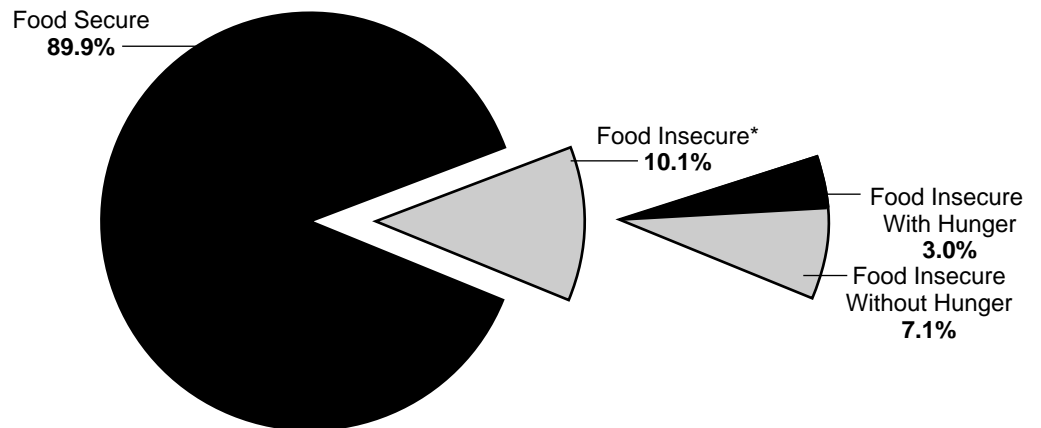
**Objective 2.1:****Reduce hunger and improve nutrition among children and low-income people in the United States.**

Despite America's prosperity, hunger is a persistent problem in the United States (see chart). In 1999, people in over 3 million U.S. households experienced hunger. There are over 2.71 million children that live in such households. USDA's domestic nutrition assistance programs work to increase food security and reduce hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. These efforts touch the lives of one in six Americans and account for nearly one-half of USDA's budget. The largest programs include:

- *Food Stamps*: This program increases the food purchasing power of low-income households across the country, helping them to purchase and enjoy a better diet.
- *Child Nutrition Programs*: These programs support nutritious meals and snacks served in schools, child care programs, adult day care centers, and after-school care programs.
- *Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)*: WIC addresses the health and nutritional needs of at risk, low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children up to 5 years of age with supplemental food packages, nutrition education, and health referrals.

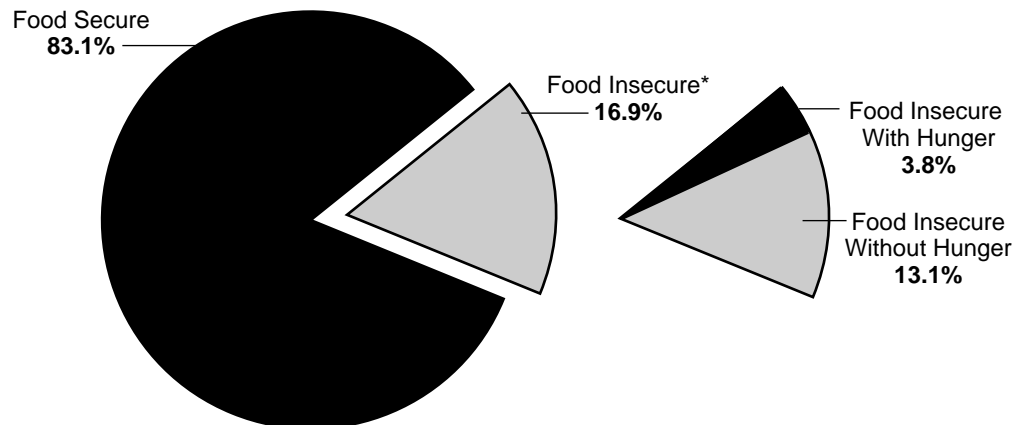
## Hunger at a Glance

*In 1999, over 3 million U.S. households experienced hunger.*



## Children Are the True Victims

*Despite the Nation's agricultural abundance, there are still 2.71 million children who live in households that experience hunger.*



*\*Food insecurity occurs when access to food is limited or uncertain by all people at all times to lead an active, healthy life.*

Source: Household Food Security, 1999.

### Key Outcome Measures:

Significantly improve food security for children and low-income people.

- Baseline: In 1998, 11.8% of households at or below 130% of poverty were "food insecure with hunger."

**Target:** By 2005, decrease to 7.9% – an approximate one-third reduction.

- Baseline: In 1998, 9.7% percent of children in households at or below 185% of poverty were “food insecure with hunger.”

***Target: By 2005, reach 7.8% – an approximate 20% reduction.***

Increase the rates of eligible populations participating in the major Federal nutrition assistance programs.

- Baseline: In 1997, 63% of eligible individuals participated in the Food Stamp Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 68% – a 7.8% increase.***

- Baseline: In 1997, 87% of all individuals fully eligible for the WIC Program participated in the program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 90% – a 3.4% increase.***

- Baseline: In school year 1995-96, 51% of children enrolled in school participated in the National School Lunch Program.

***Target: By school year 2004-05, reach 55% – a 7.8% increase.***

- Baseline: In school year 1995-96, 13% of children enrolled in school participated in the School Breakfast Program.

***Target: By school year 2004-05, reach 18% – a 38.5% increase.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 3.9% of all children ages 0 to 18 years of age (inclusive) participated in Child and Adult Care Food Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 5.1% – a 33.3% increase<sup>2</sup>.***

- Baseline: In 1997, 12% of free and reduced price eligibles participated in the Summer Food Service Program.

***Target: By 2005, reach 17% – a 41.7% increase.***

Support real improvement in the diets of those served by USDA nutrition assistance programs.

- Baseline: In 1996, the average Healthy Eating Index (HEI) rating of people with incomes under 130% of poverty was 61 out of 100.

***Target: By 2005, improve the rating to 66 out of 100 for this group.***

- Baseline: In 1996, the average HEI rating of children with incomes under 185% of poverty was 63 out of 100.

***Target: By 2005, improve the rating to 68 out of 100 for this group.***

- Baseline: In 1998, 41% of WIC mothers initiated breastfeeding.

***Target: By 2004, 50% of WIC mothers will initiate breastfeeding.***

Improve the nutritional quality of meals, food packages, commodities, and other program benefits.

- Baseline: In 1993, the National School Lunch Program meals provided 38% calories from total fat, 15% calories from saturated fat, and 33% of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for calories, vitamins, and minerals<sup>3</sup>.

***Target: By 2005, reach less than or equal to 30% calories from total fat and less than 10% calories from saturated fat; maintain calorie, vitamin and mineral content at greater than or equal to 33% of RDA.***

- Baseline: In 1993, School Breakfast Program meals provided 31% calories from total fat, 14% calories from saturated fat, 24% of the RDA for calories, and 25% of the RDA for vitamins and minerals.

***Target: By 2005, reach less than or equal to 30% calories from total fat and less than 10% calories from saturated fat; increase calories to at least 25% of RDA; maintain vitamin and mineral level at greater than or equal to 25% of RDA.***

- Baseline: In 1996, 90% of Child and Adult Care Food Program meals met FNS meal pattern requirements.

***Target: Through 2005 maintain 90%.***

<sup>2</sup> Reflects plans to expand the after-school snack component of CACFP.

<sup>3</sup> “Vitamins and minerals” includes vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

The core program outcomes targeted above cannot be achieved without a concomitant focus on ensuring benefit accuracy and minimizing losses of program funds. Furthermore, maintaining public confidence in these programs is essential to ensuring that they continue to function successfully. USDA is strongly committed to preventing losses due to fraud, error and inefficiency, and to optimize the use of each Federal, State, or local program dollar to ensure that the nutrition programs serve all those in need at the lowest possible cost. We have targeted the following reductions in error and fraud, and improvement in funds recovery, for the term of this plan.

Improve stewardship of Federal nutrition assistance program funding.

- Baseline: In 1998, the Food Stamp payment accuracy rate was 89.31%  
*Target: By 2005, increase to 90.8% – a 13.9% reduction in error.*
- Baseline: In 1997, 85.5% of school food authorities reported accurate meal counts.  
*Target: By 2005, increase to 90% – a 31.0% reduction in error.*
- Baseline: In 1997, free participation in the National School Lunch Program was 18% above the estimated number of eligible children.  
*Target: By 2005, decrease to 9% – a 50% reduction.*
- Baseline: In 1998, 68% of established Food Stamp Program claims were collected.  
*Target: By 2005, increase to 75% – a 10% increase.*

#### **Long-term Strategies:**

- Increase the rate of Food Stamp Program participation among eligible, underserved people.
- Expand the availability of the School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Programs, and the after-school snack components of the Child Nutrition Programs.
- Seek funding to support full participation in the Women, Infants, and Children Program.
- Work with schools, families, and communities to promote healthy eating and physical activity among the Nation's children.
- Integrate nutrition education with food assistance by working with States to build an effective means of delivering nutrition education.
- Keep nutrition benefits consistent with the latest nutrition science by reviewing and updating benefit structures and the nutritional content of food packages and school meals to reflect state-of-the-art dietary guidance, and deliver technical assistance to help partners provide meals that meet nutrition and safety standards.
- Work with states to reduce Food Stamp benefit payment errors.
- Reengineer and improve Food Stamp retailer compliance activities.
- Improve accountability processes in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Women, Infant, and Children Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and school programs.
- Improve collection of claims and use of sanctions, penalties and incentives.
- Increase training and technical assistance to improve State and local management practices in vulnerable programs/functions.
- Improve systems to oversee State expenditures and automated systems development.
- Promote gleaning, food recovery, and other community-based strategies that enlist more Americans in the fight to prevent hunger in the United States.
- Conduct research on food consumption and nutrient content to help shape national food assistance programs and nutrition education efforts.

#### **Resource Needs:**

Reducing hunger and improving nutrition among children and low-income people in the United States will require USDA to ensure adequate levels of Federal staff are achieving

these vital goals. Trained staff, supported by a modernized information technology infrastructure, is needed to ensure full compliance with National program standards, prevent abuse, and ensure efficient program operations.

### **Key External Factors:**

Legislation that limits access to nutrition assistance and inadequate levels of funding for USDA nutrition programs can impact USDA's ability to achieve this objective. The quality of program delivery at the State and local levels also impacts the Department's efforts to reduce hunger and improve nutrition. In addition, the state of the economy, the availability of jobs, and the impacts of welfare reform will affect the volume of nutrition assistance needed. Efforts to improve the diets of program participants are deeply influenced by the emphasis the society at large places on healthy eating, including the existing products and practices in the food marketplace.

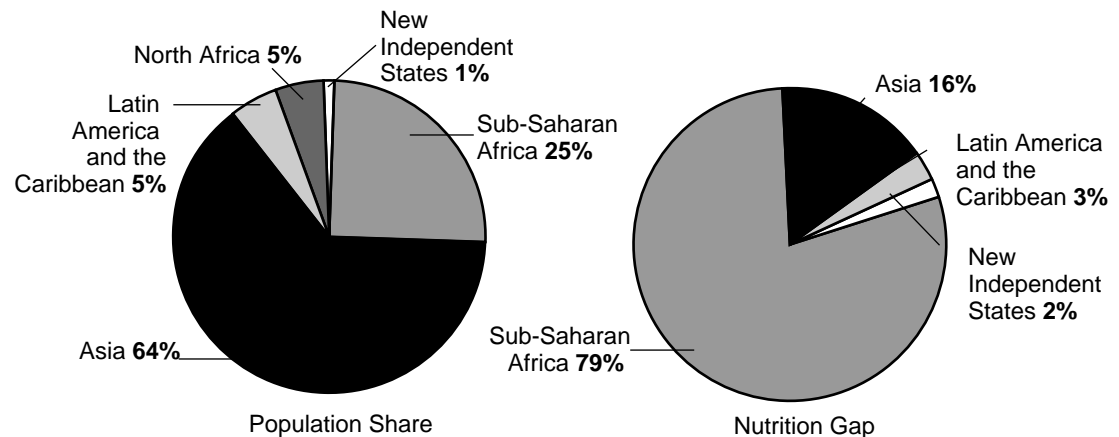
## **Objective 2.2:**

### **Reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world.**

While hunger is a profoundly important domestic issue, it is an even larger challenge around the world (see chart). Worldwide, more than 800 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition, most of them children. When considered in the context of a shrinking agricultural land base, an ever-increasing global population, and other factors, the size and scope of this problem can seem overwhelming. Fortunately, more than 180 countries around the world linked arms at the 1996 World Food Summit and agreed to work together to cut in half by the year 2015 the number of hungry and malnourished people in the world. The United States took a major step to live up to this commitment with the *U.S. Action Plan on Food Security*. Working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Agency for International Development and private non-profit voluntary organizations, USDA is working hard to ensure that the strategies laid out in this plan are put into action.

### **Hunger Around the World: Regions at Risk**

*While Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to account for only 25 percent of the population of the 66 countries<sup>1</sup> in 2008, the region is expected to account for 79 percent of the nutrition gap (domestic supply and minimum nutritional requirement).*



<sup>1</sup>41 Africa, 11 Latin America, 9 Asia and 5 New Independent States

Source: ERS Agriculture Information Bulletin 754, 1999.

**Key Outcome Measures:**

Make a significant contribution to reducing world hunger and malnutrition.

- Baseline: In 1996, the United Nations estimated that 841 million people worldwide suffered from hunger.

**Target:** *By 2005, working with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other organizations, reduce by 100 million the number of people in the world who suffer from hunger.*

**Long-term Strategies:**

- Encourage a policy environment that promotes global economic and food security.
- Strengthen food production and security research and programs that share vital research and other information with agricultural producers around the world, in order to expand the productivity and nutritional impact of global agriculture.
- Provide technical assistance to identify causes of and remedies for food insecurity – in particular, how to improve agricultural production in food insecure Nations.
- Working through the United Nations World Food Program and in partnership with Private Voluntary Organizations and the other developed countries, implement a global food-for-education initiative to reduce hunger; improve health; and promote school enrollment, attendance, and performance among children.

**Resource Needs:**

Reducing hunger around the world will require USDA to invest in adequate levels of Federal staff devoted to achieving this vital goal. Trained staff, supported by a modernized information technology infrastructure, is needed to ensure full compliance with program standards, prevent abuse, and ensure efficient operations.

**Key External Factors:**

Legislation that limits access to USDA food assistance programs and inadequate levels of funding can impact USDA's ability to achieve this objective. The quality of program delivery at the country level impacts the Department's efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition. With regard to dietary habits, the emphasis that people and cultures place on healthy eating, as well as other societal trends, including changing products, will have a deep influence.

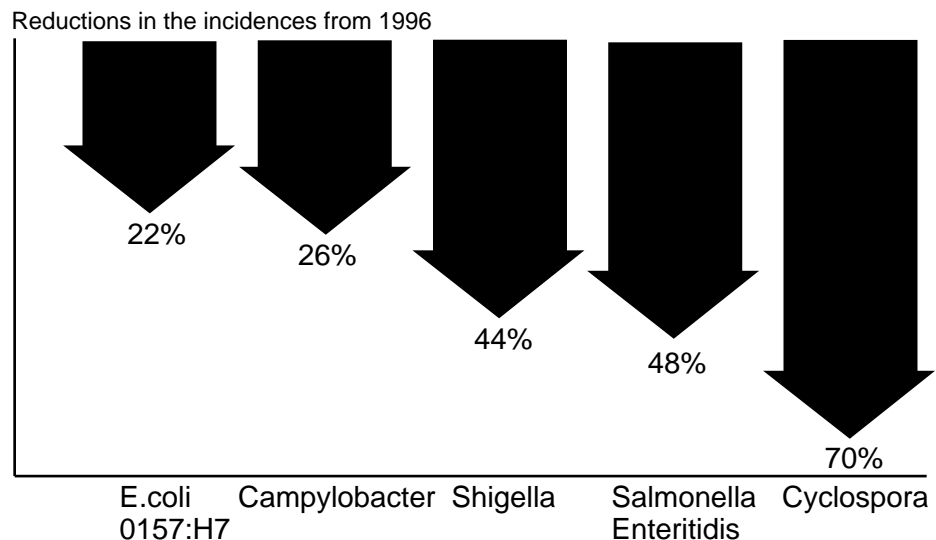
**Objective 2.3:****Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of food-borne hazards.**

USDA works hard every day to achieve the greatest possible reduction in the risk of food-borne illness associated with meat, poultry, and egg products, over which USDA has jurisdiction. In recent years, the Department in conjunction with other Federal agencies, has made significant progress in reducing foodborne illnesses by overhauling USDA's inspection system and taking a more science-based approach (see chart). Via targeted research, and specifications for purchased commodities, and through the efforts of the Nation's largest food safety inspection force, the Department is enhancing food safety as never before. USDA's inspection force works every day in every meat and poultry slaughter plant on a continuous basis, and inspects meat, poultry, and egg processing plants on a daily basis to achieve the greatest possible reduction in the risk of foodborne illness associated with such products over which USDA has jurisdiction. Preliminary foodborne illness surveillance data for 1998 compared with data from 1996 suggest that significant reductions in the incidence of foodborne illnesses have occurred. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has stated that the declines in Salmonellosis and Campylobacteriosis may reflect changes in meat and poultry plants mandated by USDA. These gains have been achieved not only

through vigorous product testing for deadly pathogens, but also through daily inspection provided by more than 7,600 USDA inspectors and veterinarians. USDA also has built up its partnerships with other Federal agencies, States, industry, academia, consumer groups, and the public, in order to better ensure safe food from farm-to-table.

### Progress Toward Safer Food

*With a new science-based food safety inspection system, USDA, working in partnerships with other organizations, has made a strong contribution to measurable reductions in the incidence of foodborne illnesses.*



Source: CDC 1996-1998.

Although the United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world, foodborne illness continues to exact a significant toll on consumers. According to USDA research, illness caused by unsafe food could cost the United States as much as \$8 billion annually in increased medical expenditures and lost productivity. Food products are exposed to a large variety of chemical residues that may pose acute and long-term risks to consumers. In order to improve public health and safety, USDA is committed to reducing the prevalence of foodborne hazards from the farm to the table through coordinated, science-based programs. The scientific data generated by these programs will provide the foundation for improving safety practices during production, processing, and consumer handling of food.

USDA must communicate clearly to the public: (1) what the food safety risks are, (2) what gaps exist in our knowledge and technologies that make it impossible to reduce risk to zero, (3) what research is being undertaken to address these gaps, and (4) what they should do to protect themselves and their families. USDA will continue building on the advances of technology and scientific understanding to encourage safe industry processes and to monitor their effectiveness. USDA also will continue its work educating the public about food safety risks and steps the American people can take to protect their health. USDA will continue to work closely with other Federal, State, and local government agencies to help mitigate risks that are not under the Department's regulatory jurisdiction, such as safe food handling in restaurants where State and local governments have the regulatory authority. In the years to come, the Department will continue these working partnerships, including coor-



dinating Federal efforts for a strong international advocate of high, science-based food safety standards around the globe.

**Key Outcome Measures:**

Reduce the prevalence of Salmonella on raw meat and poultry products.

- Baseline: In 1994, 20% of broiler chickens were found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

**Target: By 2005, reduce to 7.5% the prevalence of Salmonella on broiler chickens.**

- Baseline: In 1995, 8.7% of market hogs were found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

**Target: By 2005, reduce to 4% the prevalence of Salmonella on market hogs.**

- Baseline: In 1994, 7.5% of ground beef was found to have tested positive with Salmonella.

**Target: By 2005, reduce to 4% the presence of Salmonella in ground beef.**

Reduce the prevalence of Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products.

- Baseline: In 1998, 2.5% of samples of ready-to-eat products tested positive for Listeria monocytogenes.

**Target: By 2005, reduce by 50% the number of samples testing positive for Listeria monocytogenes.**

**Long-term Strategies:**

- Expand research and rigorous risk assessments that identify emerging and potential high-risk public food safety threats.
- Create a seamless food safety system that effectively controls food hazards from farm-to-table and drives industry adoption of preventive controls and diagnostic procedures.
- Maintain strict compliance with U.S. food safety laws for both domestic and imported products.
- Expand the use of monitoring and surveys of the food supply for potential hazards in products, as well as in production and processing methods.
- Strengthen coordination among Federal, State, tribal, and local health officials to investigate and eradicate outbreaks of foodborne illness in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.
- Educate producers, processors, food handlers, and consumers about food safety risks and how to control them.
- Support full implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act by supporting the science-based regulatory decision-making process with research data, such as food consumption surveys, pesticide use surveys, and pesticide residue data.
- Establish alternative reduced-risk pest management systems for the 20 agricultural crops most frequently consumed by children.
- Support a scientifically sound microbiological data program.

**Resource Needs:**

USDA must have adequate funding for staff and technology to conduct the research necessary to provide the scientific foundation for developing risk-based programs and procedures; improve the effectiveness of inspection and compliance programs; and provide information and education to all stakeholders on food safety risks and methods to control those risks throughout the farm-to-table continuum.

**Key External Factors:**

- Food safety risks, especially the overwhelming number emanating from animals to humans (zoonoses), are dynamic and require constant monitoring and surveillance to identify new and emerging threats.
- Even with USDA's comprehensive efforts, additional outbreaks of foodborne illness can occur depending on food handling and preparation practices of commercial establishments and individual consumers. USDA can provide information and education to these groups, but it cannot change their food handling practices.
- Improvements in food safety require a coordinated and cooperative approach involving all levels of government and all stakeholders. Failure in one area to control food safety hazards puts extra burden on other areas to accommodate for the lack of performance.
- New equipment and industrial processes, as well as new bio-engineered foods, create new opportunities for controlling hazards and introduce new concerns about safety that need to be addressed through research.
- Threats and acts of terrorism directed at the Nation's food supply present unique challenges that are difficult to assess and respond to.
- Countries exporting food to America must be encouraged to adopt food safety standards comparable to those of the U.S. Trade barriers and/or conflicting standards impair the Nation's ability to ensure the safety of imported food.

**Objective 2.4:****Improve public health through nutrition education, promotion, and research.**

Promoting healthy eating is vital to improving the health of the American people. USDA conducts comprehensive nutrition research and delivers nutrition education domestically and through coordination with international organizations. USDA is also a leader in producing the scientific knowledge that is helping all people understand the powerful ties between nutrition and health. Yet, perhaps the greatest challenge ahead is finding effective ways to translate what science knows into what people eat. Without question, the Department's nutrition education efforts will have to compete with other consumer messages. But by arming America with the facts, reaching children early, and ensuring access to healthy food, USDA can make a major contribution to the Nation's future health.

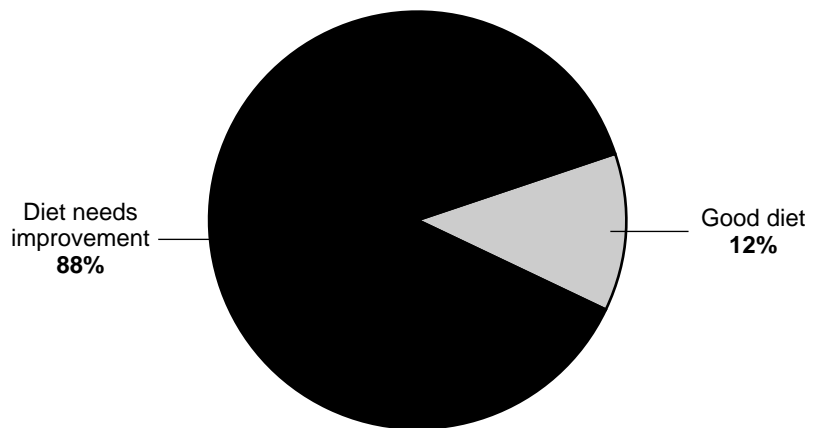
Obesity is now the most prevalent nutritional disease among American children. In addition to being a precursor of adult obesity and the litany of diseases it brings, obese children experience a wide range of health, emotional, and social problems. To address this quiet epidemic in America, USDA recently launched EAT SMART. PLAY HARD™, a National nutrition education and promotion campaign designed to convey science-based, behavior-focused and motivational messages about healthy eating and physical activity to children eligible for nutrition assistance and their caregivers.

At every age, American diets need improvement (see chart). A 1996 USDA analysis found that a mere 12.2 percent of the U.S. population ate a "good" diet that reflected the healthy eating habits promoted in USDA's widely recognized Food Guide Pyramid. The diets of low-income families were worse than the National average. Through its nutrition assistance programs, partnerships with America's schools, cutting-edge research and other efforts, the work of USDA to promote nutrition and health will become increasingly important in the years to come, as scientists and all Americans better understand the strong connection between healthy eating habits and healthy lives.

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## A Looming Public Health Threat?

*Most American's still need to improve their diets. Given the powerful links between healthy diets and healthy lives, improving the American diet will be a high USDA priority.*



Source: USDA 1996 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals.

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### **Key Outcome Measures:**

Improve diets among the general public.

- Baseline: In 1996, the average HEI rating for the general public was 63.6 out of 100.  
**Target: By 2005, improve this rating to 66 out of 100.**

### **Long-term Strategies:**

- Develop Internet-based interactive nutrition education tools to help more people assess and improve their diets.
- Research food consumption patterns, the impacts of nutrition on health and children's capacity to learn, and the role of diet in maintaining health and lowering the risk of birth defects and disease in vulnerable populations.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of USDA nutrition and food safety education efforts in influencing consumer behavior, and direct resources to those efforts that demonstrate the greatest effectiveness.
- Share diet-related research with developing countries to promote basic nutrition education globally.
- Improve the nutritional quality of the food supply by developing more healthy food products.
- Increase data on children's diets to assess food safety risks, such as microbial pathogens or pesticide exposure.
- Enhance scientific knowledge and public understanding of the relationship between diet and health.
- Strengthen partnerships with relevant public and private organizations in order to leverage scarce resources.

***Resource Needs:***

Adequate investments in information technologies and in staff training are necessary to maximize USDA's ability to improve the American diet. It also will be necessary to maintain all existing resources dedicated to attaining these performance targets.

***Key External Factors:***

The major external factor that could impact the achievement of this objective is inadequate funds, both for USDA and for partner organizations, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, universities engaged in nutrition research, and other public and private entities.

**Goal 3: Maintain and enhance the Nation's natural resources and environment.**

USDA provides leadership in the use, management, and protection of the Nation's agricultural, forest, and rangeland resources. The influence of USDA programs extends from the mountaintops to the valleys and to the rivers and communities downstream. Within this landscape, high-quality soils and abundant supplies of clean water provide the essential building blocks for production agriculture, for many rural economies, and for all life. Because much of the land in the Nation is agricultural and forest land, sustainable management of these areas is essential to ensuring that all Americans have clean air, clean water, and pleasant places in which to live and enjoy America's great outdoors. America's soils, water supplies, and range and forest ecosystems not only produce the raw materials for food, clothing, and shelter, but they also provide the settings for recreation and other outdoor activities that are highly valued by the American people.

The focus of USDA's role is to ensure the use of the land, for the diverse benefits it provides, without degrading the productive capacity and health of the land or the environment. USDA's efforts in managing the National Forests and Grasslands and assisting land owners and managers throughout the country, help to ensure that the Nation's natural resources are able to meet the long-term needs of a dynamic society with an increasing population while providing for the stewardship of the land and environment. As public concern about the quality of the environment has grown, USDA has focused more attention on ensuring that agriculture's impact on the environment is beneficial. USDA's efforts include helping communities work together to plan sustainable use of their natural resources. On the National Forests and Grasslands that USDA manages, the Department determines the level of goods and services that can be generated by the land. Also, USDA works with the public and the science community to develop management plans for our forests as well as private lands that will deliver goods and services to the American people within the capability of the land. In making these decisions, USDA weighs the many benefits the resource delivers, and what it will take to sustain and enhance these environments for future generations.

Primarily, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service carry out USDA's stewardship activities. The Department's work is coordinated with the Farm Service Agency; the Agricultural Research Service; and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, as well as with other government land management agencies at all levels, and private land managers and organizations. USDA's long-term objectives are interdependent and focus on ensuring productive capability in the future; protecting the environment; and providing for the use of the land for the benefits associated with such use.

**Objective 3.1: Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations.**

One of the most important responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture is safeguarding the productive capacity of America's natural resources. Our Nation and USDA's success in this regard is interrelated with our objectives to protect our environment and to provide the benefits of land use. Just as the resources of our landscape are interconnected, USDA's efforts will be collaborative with our partners and integrated to ensure future production capabilities. USDA helps ensure that the Nation's crop, grazing, and forest lands can be used sustainably to produce adequate food and fiber today without sacrificing the needs of future generations.

The continuation of current trends suggests the quality and productive capacity of America's land will slowly decline. Less than half of the Nation's cropland and pastureland are currently managed under systems that ensure their long-term productivity. Only a little more than one-third of non-Federal rangeland is healthy and well managed. A great part of the challenge is reaching private landowners and providing them with the technical and financial assistance necessary to manage their resources for the long run. The greatest threat to cropland is soil erosion. The availability of water is also a concern in many parts of the country. Another concern is the increasingly rapid loss of farmland to development. USDA provides incentives to farmers to keep the best land in agriculture and to help urbanizing communities protect against loss of open space and the flooding and sedimentation problems that sprawl can cause. Forests and rangeland ecosystems also face significant threats from fire, insects, disease, and invasive species. Using certain management techniques in priority areas, such as municipal watersheds, critical wildlife habitats, and communities can mitigate these threats and enhance the quality of America's natural resources. For this reason, USDA efforts – from helping farmers reduce erosion to assisting private landowners in reducing the risk of wildfires – are of vital and enduring importance to the Nation.

### **Key Outcome Measures:**

Maintain resource health and productive capacity.

- Baseline: In 1999, more than 800 million acres of the Nation's cropland, grazing lands, and private, non-industrial forestland needed conservation treatment to address resource problems threatening their quality and long-term sustainability of production.

***Target: By the end of FY 2005, an additional 240 million acres of cropland, grazing land, and private, non-industrial forestland will be managed under conservation systems that protect their quality and ensure long-term sustainability of production.<sup>4</sup>***

Reduce erosion damage on cropland.

- Baseline: In 1997, preliminary data indicates that 112 million acres of cropland were eroding at rates that, if continued, will reduce the quality and productive capacity of the soil.

***Target: In 2005, the acreage of cropland eroding at damaging rates will be reduced to 95 million acres.***

Reduce risk of fire.

- Baseline: 67 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands today face extreme risk of fire-related losses.

***Target: In 2006, reduce the proportion of acres in short-interval, fire-adapted ecosystems at moderate and high risk compared to acres at low risk by 20%.***

### **Long-term Strategies:**

- In recent years, USDA conservation programs focused on solving the most serious erosion problems. While maintaining this progress, USDA also will help producers broaden their focus and take a proactive approach that prevents resource damage and promotes sustainable use of natural resources.
- Address resource management on a wider scale—in terms of watersheds and ecosystems—rather than in terms of political boundaries such as State lines or agency administrative units. Ensure that these wide-area plans are locally led and consider the interests of all stakeholders.

<sup>4</sup> Performance targets are set only for non-Federal rangeland and forestland because consistent definitions and baseline data must be developed before unified targets can be set for all lands. USDA is working with the Department of the Interior to develop a single method of evaluating the Nation's progress on sustainable rangeland management across public and private lands. Similar efforts also are underway for sustainable forest management.

- Conduce research and identify priority opportunities to reduce the risk of loss from fire, insects and diseases, and other invasive species, of forest and rangeland resources. Emphasize cooperative actions with other Federal Government agencies, as well as private land managers and organizations.
- Increase cooperation with a greater diversity of people. Establish offices on tribal land, when requested by tribal governments, to provide Native American and Alaska Natives with equal access to USDA services.
- Develop methods for estimating recreation capacity and demand using ecological and social factors.
- Reduce the risk of exotic invasive pests and diseases entering the U.S. by monitoring potential entry routes.
- Conduct research and data collection to establish baseline information and indicators, especially for sustainability, where such data is lacking today, and establish processes to track this information in the future.
- Research and analyze the effects of global climate change on the natural resource base and on agriculture. Identify farm and forest policies that support U.S. environmental commitments, while helping farmers adapt to climate variability.
- Conduct research and development technologies and production practices that facilitate sustainable production.

***Resource Needs:***

- In order to help producers protect America's natural resource base on non-Federal lands, USDA will need to maintain an adequate service delivery infrastructure across the Nation.
- Significant turnover is expected in the workforce in the next decade as current employees reach retirement age. Few new employees will have an agricultural background. Extensive training programs must be developed so new employees can help customers address the increasingly complex issues of sustainable management.
- Timely information on weather, soil moisture, and soil temperature is crucial to help producers plan for severe climate events, such as prolonged drought. Investments are needed to acquire and disseminate this vital data.
- Data on farmers' production practices is needed to better understand agriculture's need for and impact on soil, water, and other resources. Farm sector databases on production processes must be created and maintained.
- Additional resources, research, and collaborative efforts with partners and stakeholders are needed to address the significant risks posed by the threats from catastrophic wildfire, invasive species, and insect and disease outbreaks.

***Key External Factors:***

Continued weakness in the farm economy could limit producers' ability to implement conservation practices that require new equipment or skills. The limitation will be greatest for those with less profitable operations, less productive natural resources, or those who are underserved by USDA. Increasing demand for production today, without adequate attention to conservation and sustainability, may damage the resource base. USDA also works closely with employees of local conservation districts, State conservation agencies, State departments of forestry, and the State extension service. Changes in these programs and budgets could affect USDA's efforts. Wildfires, insect and disease epidemics, new introductions of invasive species, and other large unplanned natural disturbances can radically alter the landscape and rapidly change management strategies, priorities, and funding needs.

**Objective 3.2:                      Protect the quality of the environment.**

Americans expect their environment to provide adequate supplies of clean water, clean air, and pleasant and healthy places in which to live. USDA plays a vital role in helping ensure that this expectation is met for generations to come, as its programs affect the Nation's headwaters in the mountains, agricultural lands, and both rural and urban communities downstream. The Department works with private landowners and natural resource managers to ensure that their activities do not create health hazards to their families, to people downstream or downwind, or to the health of our lands and environment. In meeting its responsibilities for environmental protection, USDA manages the National Forests and Grasslands, assists land users, and works closely with other government and non-government entities to protect and preserve our Nation's environmental quality.

USDA's efforts are focused on protecting environmental quality, especially the health of land and water resources, as they support life in all forms, including plants and animals. In addition to mitigating or averting negative environmental impacts, USDA is committed to the cleanup and restoration of lands adversely affected by past activities. For example, abandoned mines and processing facilities exist on and near National Forests and Grasslands. Cleanup of these sites is imperative to protect the quality of the environment and the health of local ecosystems.

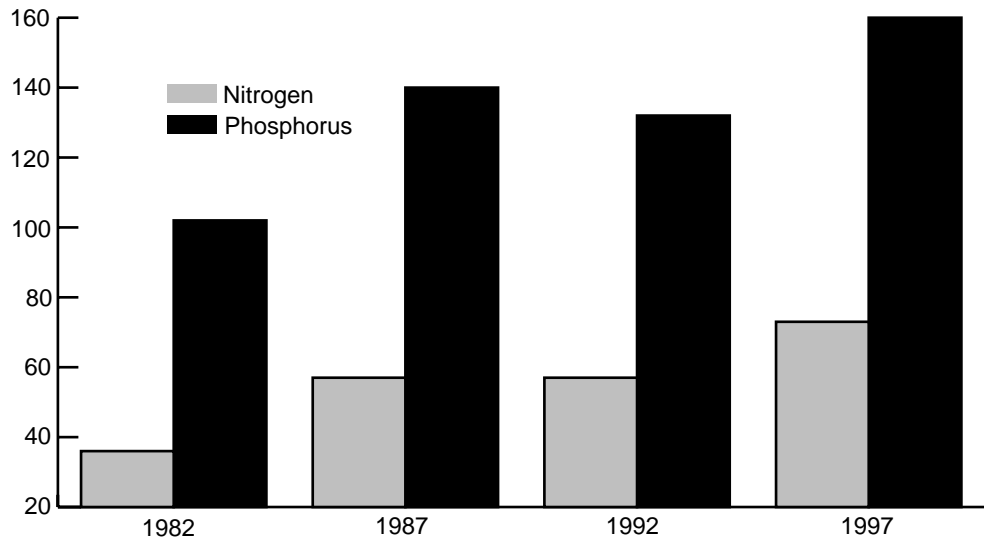
In recent decades, the Nation has made significant progress in protecting America's natural resources and improving the environment, but much remains to be done. The Nation's best farmland is being lost at an increasingly rapid rate due to urban sprawl. Degradation of water and air by runoff and other non-point sources of pollution, loss of wetlands, and declines of important wildlife populations are continuing or increasing in many areas. There also is concern about possible effects of changes in the global environment. The most extensive threat to water quality from agricultural, forestry, and grazing activities is sediment. The greatest current concern, however, is the risk that excess nutrients and pathogens might enter water from poorly managed animal agriculture facilities, especially in areas of concentrated livestock production (see chart). USDA has set ambitious goals to address these problems and is developing methods to more accurately monitor the success of these efforts to improve water quality and watershed health.



## Cleaner Water Starts with a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan

*There is concern about the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus in our waters. If all animal feeding operations establish comprehensive conservation systems, agriculture can make a historic contribution to clean water.*

Number of Counties With Problems



Source: NRCS Analysis of Census of Agriculture, 2000.

### Key Outcome Measures:

Protect water quality and watershed health.

- Baseline: In 1999, an estimated that 272,600 animal feeding operations may need assistance from USDA to design and implement comprehensive nutrient management plans.

**Target:** *By 2009, these animal feeding operations will have comprehensive nutrient management plans developed or implemented.*
- Baseline: By 1999, almost 2.6 million acres of conservation buffers were installed by landowners to protect waterways.

**Target:** *By 2005, an additional 2.8 million acres of buffers will be installed to government standards to help reduce the movement of pollutants into America's water and air.*
- Baseline: USDA is currently establishing methods to monitor and classify watershed health.

**Target:** *By 2006, there will be a 20% increase in the number of restored or improved rangeland and forestland watersheds.*
- Baseline: Complete information does not exist on selected wildlife and plant populations that are indicators of the success of USDA's stewardship efforts and the overall health of the Nation's environment.

**Target:** *By 2001, track populations of selected wildlife and plant species on National Forests and Grasslands to gauge the effectiveness of USDA efforts and to gain a greater understanding of the overall health of the Nation's environment. By 2006, improve trends for selected wildlife and plant populations.*

Enhance urban environments.

- Baseline: In 1999, percentage of urban areas with forest cover and green space was 27.1%.

**Target:** *By 2006, attain a 5% increase in forest cover and green space in urban areas.*

Maintain wetlands values.

- Baseline: By 1992, the Nations's wetlands had been reduced to slightly more than 156 million acres. Between 1992 and 1997, the loss of wetlands continued, though at a slower rate than earlier.

**Target:** *By 2005, no net loss of wetlands on agricultural lands.*

Clean up contaminated sites on USDA-managed facilities and lands and restore affected ecosystems and watersheds.

- Baseline: In 1998, USDA had over 2,000 sites contaminated from the release of hazardous materials.

**Target:** *By 2006, complete cleanup on 10% of the USDA-managed facilities and lands that have been contaminated by hazardous materials.*

### **Long-term Strategies:**

- Facilitate a greater National focus on active efforts to protect the environment. Help communities and government agencies identify potential problems and take responsible action to prevent them.
- Foster broad approaches to natural resource management. Focus on strategies that protect whole watersheds and ecosystems and provide assistance to individual resource managers within the context of this broader work.
- Strengthen cooperation between USDA and local conservation districts, resource conservation and development councils, and State conservation agencies and forestry departments to ensure that USDA's efforts take into account local priorities and are focused on issues that have the greatest impact on people's lives.
- Help livestock producers reduce their potential for contribution to air and water quality problems.
- Increase assistance to farmers to better manage nutrients and pesticides to reduce the risk of contamination of air and water resources.
- Restore conditions in key watersheds to support ecological functions and beneficial water uses. Emphasize restoration of priority wetlands.
- Develop new technologies and improved management practices that enable producers to minimize the impact of their activities on the environment. Provide statistical data and analysis on agricultural chemical use, production methods, land productivity, and integrated pest management practices. Conduct education, extension, and technology transfer activities to accelerate adoption of more environmentally friendly practices.
- Provide financial incentives to farmers, ranchers, and foresters for practicing good stewardship.
- Strengthen USDA's local conservation delivery infrastructure to provide farmers, ranchers, foresters, and communities with timely conservation technical assistance.
- Implement a system with National standards for assessing watershed conditions.
- Expand research in support of integrated system-wide approaches to meet the ecological challenges in areas such as water quality and management.

### **Resource Needs:**

Adequate investments are needed to fill critical data gaps on current conditions of watersheds and ecosystems. Better tools are necessary to monitor the effects that conservation practices and historical activities, such as mining, road-building, and timber harvesting, have on watershed health. Effective strategies for problem prevention and watershed protection require a high degree of technical expertise in disciplines not currently well repre-

sented in USDA's field-level workforce. Finally, cooperation must be enhanced among government and private entities engaged in natural resources inventory and assessment to ensure access to vital data and to establish standards for comparability that allow for greater understanding of key environmental indicators. Financial incentives and cooperation with State and local government programs will be needed to protect prime and important farmland from development and ensure development occurs in a way that protects the environment. Achieving the target for animal feeding operations will require significant adequate investment of public and private funds.

***Key External Factors:***

- On non-Federal lands, protecting water supplies and managing wildlife is primarily the responsibility of State governments. In addition, many environmental issues cross international as well as State boundaries. Yet opportunities to protect and improve the environment are not confined by man made jurisdictions. The effectiveness of USDA efforts depends on the ability and willingness of various authorities to work together.
- There are significant gaps in the information used to set priorities and develop efforts to protect the environment. Decisions based on incomplete knowledge may not achieve the intended result.
- Practices that minimize water and air quality problems can involve high costs or increased risks to the landowner. For example, systems that safely manage animal wastes require substantial investment, and pest management systems that minimize the use of chemicals run the risk of increased crop losses due to pests or disease. Continued weakness in the farm economy could limit producers' ability to use these approaches.
- There is substantial evidence that global environmental change is occurring, and that it can result in extreme weather variability. These changes can have significant implications for the Nation's natural resources. Although uncertainties remain as to the extent that agriculture can contribute to stemming environmental change, it is clear that certain conservation practices can help slow the rise in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- The presence of sites contaminated with hazardous materials on USDA-managed facilities and lands represents an enormous potential liability for America's taxpayers. If the resources for site cleanup are not provided, potential liabilities could be in the billions of dollars.

**Objective 3.3:**

**Provide multiple benefits to people from the Nation's natural resources.**

The Nation's vast landscape, from its mountains, valleys, and rivers, to its fertile soil, abundant water supplies, and diverse natural resources, provides the base for the Nation's wealth – today's standard of living and quality of life. Americans are dedicated to handing on that legacy undiminished. USDA is committed to ensuring the benefits of using the Nation's natural resources without degrading the future capability of the land and the environment. Through the use of the land, the benefits that the Nation's soil, water, and ecosystems provide to people today are rich and varied. They include the traditional commodities – crops, livestock, timber, forest products, and minerals – that have long been the basis of rural economies. They also provide other benefits that society values, such as opportunities for recreation in the great outdoors, that allow the Nation's increasingly urban society to escape from the congestion and fast pace of modern life.

Well-managed cropland, grazing lands, and forestland can provide benefits in helping to address problems that do not originate from agricultural operations. For example, some conservation practices increase the organic matter in cropland soils; this reduces carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, helping to reduce the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Industries seeking cost-effective ways to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases associated with their operations are interested in buying credit for this carbon storage from farmers.

One of the most important benefits that well-managed rural lands can provide is clean water to meet the Nation's needs. Protecting water supplies was one of the original reasons for the creation of the National Forest System. Those lands provide water supplies for small communities and great cities of the West. To derive the greatest benefits from the limited water supplies of the arid West, farmers and the managers of the reservoirs that store and supply water for homes, cities, and industries depend on the predictions of annual stream-flow that USDA provides by monitoring snowpack and snowmelt.

In helping to provide multiple benefits from natural resources to people today, USDA reaches far beyond the small segment of the Nation's people who own or operate agricultural and forestry enterprises to engage people who live in small towns, rapidly urbanizing areas, and even large urban areas. USDA's natural resources agencies help individuals and communities develop their resources to provide more varied products and services to potential customers and greater economic benefits to the landowners and community. USDA watershed planners help communities trying to plan the use of watersheds and floodplains to provide increased benefits and protect property values so that all of the residents of the area benefit.

### **Key Outcome Measures:**

Provide sustainable production levels of the wide variety of goods and services being provided by the National Forests and Grasslands.

- Baseline: There currently are significant gaps in the data necessary to set long-term performance measures related to providing multiple benefits to people from the National Forests and Grasslands.

**Target:** *In 2001, establish baseline data for the range of goods and services provided by the National Forests and Grasslands. By 2006, determine sustainable production levels, based on timely and valid scientific data.*

Improve the satisfaction of visitors to National Forests and Grasslands.

- Baseline: In 1999, user satisfaction with recreation programs and facilities was 84%.

**Target:** *By 2006, attain a 5% increase in user satisfaction.*

Benefits from watershed protection infrastructures<sup>5</sup> are maintained.

- Baseline: Nearly 2,000 small watershed areas that cover a total of 140 million acres have been developed to help prevent flooding, protect lives and property, and provide benefits of water supply and recreational opportunities. Continuation of these benefits depends on rehabilitation of the small earthen dams that are a central feature of the watershed management infrastructure. Of these dams, 2,200 urgently need attention.

**Target:** *By 2010, rehabilitation will be completed on 2,200 dams.*

### **Long-term Strategies:**

- Expand research and other efforts to more efficiently process, use, and reuse limited natural resources.

<sup>5</sup> Nearly 2,000 projects covering 140 million acres and including a network of 10,000 small watershed structures exist across the Nation to help prevent and mitigate flooding to protect human health and safety. These projects also have contributed to improving water quality and supplies, creating wildlife habitat, and providing recreational opportunities. Today, the ability of this infrastructure to continue providing desired benefits is challenged by: aging structures in need of rehabilitation, development that has placed individuals and communities at risk in case of structure failure, sediment buildup in reservoirs threatening capacity and affecting water quality, and emerging natural resource concerns not previously addressed.

- Stretch limited resources through cost-recovery policies that ensure that those who seek special-use permits for the Nation's forests finance the cost to taxpayers of dealing with their requests.
- Acquire land or interest in land through purchase and exchange to protect National forests and grasslands.
- Assist government agencies and private landowners in sustainably managing forest and range lands, especially in ecosystems where ownerships are intermingled, to ensure concerted efforts toward shared objectives.
- Conduct research and establish monitoring systems to assess the economic values and quantities of botanical resources and other special forest products being provided by the Nation's forests and rangelands.
- Expand and modernize climate observation networks to provide timely, accurate data on soil moisture, snowpack, stream-flow, and other weather forecasts to increase the preparedness of farms, ranches, and rural towns.
- Encourage creation of resource conservation and development councils in rural areas across the Nation to support local economic development, increase conservation activities, and enhance the environment and the rural standard of living.
- Conduct research and economic analysis on the potential to abate greenhouse gas emissions and increase storage of carbon in the soil on U.S. forest, range, and crop lands. Identify and validate carbon credits for agriculture and forest conservation practices.

***Resource Needs:***

- Adequate financial and technical resources are needed to support collaborative efforts among natural resource managers, scientists, and consumers to develop balanced strategies to ensure a sustainable flow of goods and services from the Nation's forests and grasslands.
- Surveys are needed to evaluate customer satisfaction, identify public objectives regarding natural resource management, and inform policy and resource management debates.
- USDA must invest in recruiting and training workers to address complex natural resource management issues.
- Research investments are needed in research to increase the understanding of how ecosystems and their resources are affected by management actions and other disturbances caused by nature and by people.
- Addressing the issues that concern the public and resource managers will require integration of many kinds of data generated by varying sources. Cooperation must be enhanced with other government and private entities engaged in natural resources inventory and assessment activities to ensure data compatibility.

***Key External Factors:***

Opinions vary widely regarding the most appropriate balance of resource protection and use. Obtaining information on quantities and values for some of the goods and services is needed to determine sustainable levels of resource use and to better understand the resiliency of ecosystems. In some cases, information for goods and services from non-federally managed land may be difficult to obtain.

**Goal 4: Enhance the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper.**

One of USDA's core missions is ensuring that the 20% of our Nation that resides in rural areas have the same opportunities for a high quality of life and economic growth as other Americans. Life in a small town offers many advantages – less crime, cheaper housing, and a strong sense of community among the residents. There is, however, a downside to having a limited number of people living over a large geographical area. Rural America has fewer job opportunities and the jobs available are often at lower pay and with fewer benefits. The median household income in rural areas is 23% below that of urban areas. This has resulted in significant out-migration in some parts of the Nation and a lower standard of living for many who remain behind.

Rural communities often lack the most basic services. Many rural residents have no primary care physician in their community and must travel great distances to receive basic health care. With limited immediate access to medical care, rural residents are at greater risk when they are sick or have an accident. The high cost per user of bringing services to rural residents, such as electricity, clean public water, public sewer systems, telecommunications, or cable television, results in reduced income to the service provider and a reluctance to invest in rural areas. For example, the revenue per mile for a city electric utility service is eight times higher than it is for rural systems. Bringing these types of services to rural communities is a challenge for USDA and its many partners – both public and private – that are committed to improving the rural quality of life.

Increasing economic opportunities in rural areas can, in some cases, not just slow out-migration, but lead to population growth and sharp increases in demands for local goods and services. USDA works to ensure that its development assistance enhances the quality of life in rural communities, without erasing the unique and attractive qualities of country living.

USDA provides technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of rural communities and their leaders to build a vibrant future. The Department also directly invests in housing, telecommunications, community facilities, rural utilities, and rural businesses. This help is provided primarily by Rural Development agencies, but other USDA agencies contribute through research, technical and financial assistance for flood control, land-use planning, and natural resource development. Whenever possible, USDA assistance is provided in cooperation with other sources of help to leverage limited resources.

The advent of electronic commerce offers a unique chance to close the “opportunity gap” between urban and rural America. Those characteristics of rural communities that have historically limited their economic growth, such as geographical distances and a small number of potential customers, are irrelevant to the Information Revolution. But, Internet businesses must have access to modern, rapid telecommunications, known as broadband service, to succeed. A recent study of broadband service, conducted by USDA and the Department of Commerce, found that broadband deployment in rural areas is lagging far behind urban deployment. Providing this service to rural communities will be critical to their participation in the Nation's current and future economic opportunities.

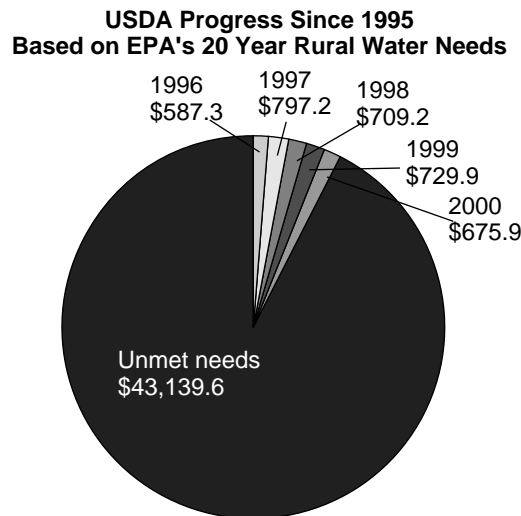
**Objective 4.1:****Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.**

Rural America is characterized by great diversity in the resources and needs of its communities. USDA, in partnership with a variety of public and private organizations, is a key provider of technical and financial assistance that is tailored to the needs of each rural community. From helping create and save jobs in America's country communities, to helping rural citizens buy their first home, to providing essential services, like safe running water (see chart), USDA's efforts reflect the Nation's commitment to ensuring a vibrant future for rural America.

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**Water and Environmental Programs**

*This chart shows the progress that USDA has made towards meeting the demand for water system improvements in rural areas.*



Source: Rural Utilities Service, 2000.

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**Key Outcome Measures:**

Create or save jobs in rural areas.

- Baseline: In 1999, nonmetro unemployment was 4.4%, which was 0.2% higher than metro unemployment.  
**Target: By 2005, the spread between nonmetro and metro unemployment will be cut in half.**
- Baseline: In 1999, 74,379 jobs were created or saved through USDA financing of businesses in rural areas.  
**Target: By 2005, create or save 93,000 rural jobs.**

Increase homeownership in rural areas.

- Baseline: In 1999, 75.4% of rural residents owned their home.  
**Target: By 2005, homeownership among rural residents will be 76%.**
  - Baseline: In 1999, 55,941 rural residents received USDA financial assistance to purchase a home of their own.  
**Target: By 2005, provide credit for a home purchase to 68,000 rural residents.**
-

Provide safe drinking water to rural residents.

- Baseline: In 1997, 7% of rural households had drinking water reported as not safe to drink.

***Target: By 2005, the percentage of rural households with unsafe drinking water will be reduced to 6.5%.***

- Baseline: In 1999, 748,000 rural people were connected to public water for the first time.

***Target: By 2005, connect 843,000 rural people to public water for the first time.***

### ***Long-term Strategies:***

- Draw private capital into rural areas by partnering with private lenders to jointly finance projects, guaranteeing private loans, and encouraging third-party specialty lenders who finance specific projects at reduced rates.
- Expand high-speed Internet access service in rural areas.
- Give priority to projects that provide safe drinking water to low-income families with unsafe or poor-quality drinking water in their homes, or who have unsanitary waste disposal facilities.
- Ensure that rural housing projects for low-income families are well managed and maintained.
- Increase the income of rural entrepreneurs by encouraging marketing and purchasing cooperatives.
- Work with local organizations to help rural communities diversify their economies and encourage the sustainable use of their local natural and cultural resources.
- Partner with State and local governments, educational institutions, as well as private and non-profit organizations, to tailor technical assistance and financial programs to the unique needs of rural communities.
- Partner with other Federal agencies to bring their resources to bear on strengthening the rural economic outlook.
- Conduct the census of agriculture to gain in-depth knowledge of America's rural agricultural communities.
- Better understand the role of infrastructure, housing, and business assistance in rural economic growth.
- Conduct research to help rural towns adjust to broad trends that impact their future, such as welfare reform, increasing foreign competition in low-wage industries, an aging population, and rapid growth in communities near major cities.
- Expand research to develop profitable alternative crops and on- or near-farm processing that add value to agricultural products and enhance the economic viability of rural communities and families.

### ***Resource Needs:***

Adequate levels in funding are necessary for USDA to achieve its goal of expanding opportunities and enhancing the rural standard of living. The Department must have staff strategically located throughout the country and reasonably close to rural customers. Adequate staff is necessary if USDA is to provide technical assistance to customers and credit supervision to minimize losses to the Government. Additional funding is needed to enhance financial systems in order to accurately forecast the cost of rural development programs. Sufficient funds also are needed to finance the strategies listed in this Plan, especially to increase high-speed Internet access service in rural America and to rehabilitate aging rural family housing projects.



**Key External Factors:**

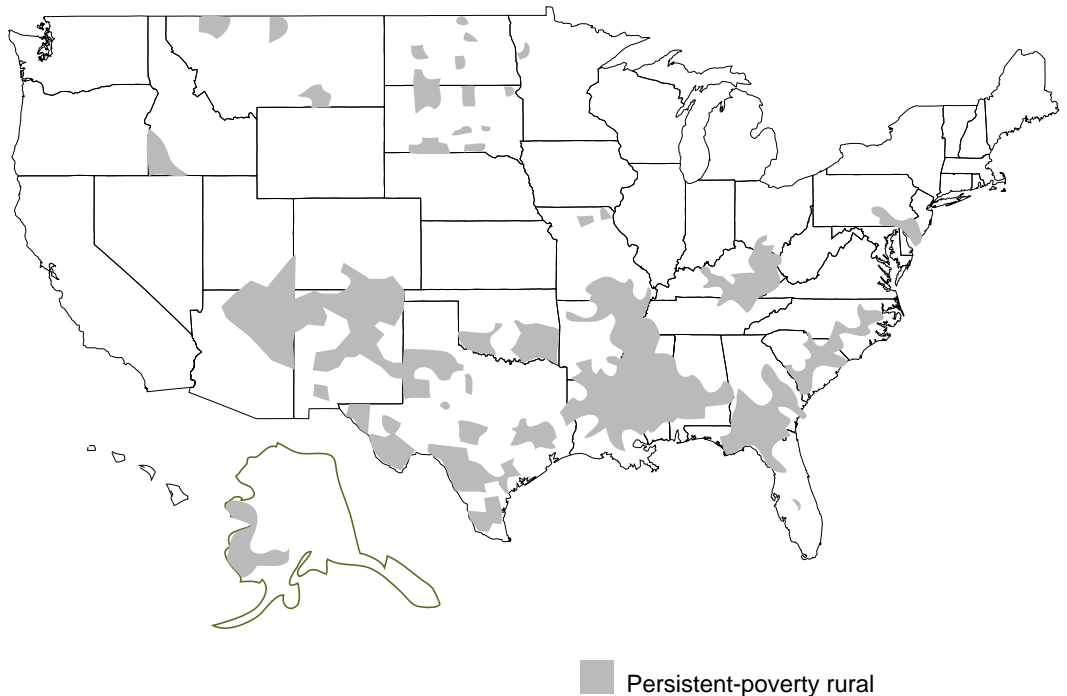
Achievement of the performance measures targeted in this goal depends on the continuation of a strong U.S. economy. It also is subject to the availability of funds from Congress. USDA can stretch its limited resources by jointly funding projects with private lenders only if those lenders are willing to participate and loan recipients are able to meet the higher payments normally required from joint funding. Significant fluctuations in interest rates or unemployment also have a major impact on the ability of many rural residents, communities, and businesses to qualify for credit and/or repay existing debts.

**Objective 4.2:****Ensure the neediest rural residents and communities have equal access to the USDA programs that will help them succeed.**

Economic growth in rural areas has not occurred evenly throughout the country. Across America there are pockets of severe poverty, often populated by minorities. There are 535 rural counties that have had poverty rates above 20% in every census since 1960 (see chart). An estimated 8.5 million rural residents live in poverty. More than 2.5 million rural residents live in physically inadequate housing, with 5.5% of them living in poverty. While clean water is immediately available to most Americans, an estimated 690,000 rural residents have no running water in their homes.

**Reaching Out to the Neediest Communities**

There are 535 rural counties that have had poverty rates above 20% in every census since 1960.



Source: Prepared by Economic Research Service based on Decennial census data, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990.

An answer to many of these problems is greater investment in public services and jobs in the local community. Unfortunately, while recent strides have been made, USDA technical assistance and credit programs have not been evenly distributed in the past. If these persistent-poverty communities are to succeed, they need substantial technical help tailored to their unique community challenges. They also need help obtaining financial assistance. USDA is committed to ensuring that all rural communities are given an equal opportunity to prosper.

**Key Outcome Measures:**

Assist the neediest rural communities.

- Baseline: In 1999, 612 assisted communities successfully applied for non-USDA financial assistance.  
*Target: In 2005, the number of communities assisted with non-USDA financial assistance will be 800.*
- Baseline: In 1999, 247 communities located in persistent-poverty rural counties received financial assistance to establish or improve a system for drinking water or waste disposal.  
*Target: In 2005, the number of communities assisted in persistent-poverty counties will be 278.*
- Baseline: In 1999, 72 cooperatives serving persistent-poverty counties received financial assistance to establish or improve the local electric service.  
*Target: In 2005, the number of cooperatives assisted in persistent-poverty counties will be maintained.*
- Baseline: In 1999, 83 cooperatives serving the 700 counties experiencing out-migration received financial assistance to establish or improve the local electric service.  
*Target: In 2005, the number of cooperatives assisted in counties experiencing out-migration will be maintained.*

**Long-term Strategies:**

- Encourage the participation of previously underserved communities in USDA rural development programs.
- Use special initiatives, such as Rural Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, to reach needy areas, encourage strategic planning at the local level, provide technical assistance, and target resources.
- Strengthen relations with minority organizations, including minority colleges and universities, and use them as a vehicle for reaching minority communities and individuals.
- Conduct research to identify factors that promote development in poor rural towns and places facing significant out-migration.
- Evaluate the benefits and costs of rural development efforts and find ways to target programs for greatest effectiveness. Provide a better understanding of how Federal policies affect needy rural communities.
- Assess the extent of the Digital Divide in rural America and how it can be overcome.
- Examine the impact of welfare reform on poor rural communities and their participation in USDA programs, such as Food Stamps.
- Through increased support, enhance the institutional capacity of minority-serving institutions, such as the 1890, 1994, and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

**Resource Needs:**

USDA must have a sufficient number of employees who are trained in community development, if it is to successfully serve the neediest rural communities. Without sufficient staff, USDA will be unable to adequately reach and assist precisely those individuals and communities that most need their Government's help.

***Key External Factors:***

USDA can reach out to rural communities, but it cannot require them to apply for financial help. Such assistance, when requested, must compete for funding with other applicants and the recipient must demonstrate the ability to repay the Government loan. Within limits, USDA can target funds to specific needs.

**Goal 5: Operate an efficient, effective, and discrimination-free organization.**

USDA programs and services depend on a strong infrastructure that is made up of skilled employees, fair and effective administrative processes, modern management practices, information systems, and safe and efficient facilities. USDA is an organization of over 100,000 people located around the world. The Department's programs touch people, in every school, in every household, and in many Nations throughout the world. Not surprisingly, USDA has many of the same concerns as large corporations – how to deliver the best customer service, how to attract and retain the best employees, where to invest limited resources, how to comply with applicable regulatory requirements, how to get the information needed to manage a complex global organization providing a wide array of services, and how to improve the environmental performance of its facilities.

The goals of this Strategic Plan cannot be achieved without the right people, practices, and systems in place. It is imperative that USDA's infrastructure be adequately maintained and effectively managed. USDA takes seriously the responsibility to provide fair and effective programs and services while minimizing the cost to taxpayers. The importance of treating employees, customers, and stakeholders with dignity and respect is reflected in USDA's policies and practices. USDA also is committed to collaborating with its diverse network of customers and stakeholders to develop innovative, cost-effective ways of providing services and ensuring equal opportunity and access to these services. Toward this end, USDA focuses on two major operational objectives: ensuring fair and equitable treatment of customers and employees and improving organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.

**Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees.**

USDA's long struggle with ensuring equity in services and equal opportunity in employment is well documented. The work done by USDA is critical to farmers and ranchers, low-income families, rural communities, and every American who trusts that the food on their plate is safe. With all of these important responsibilities, the Department simply cannot afford civil rights shortcomings that compromise the important work of its diverse and talented staff. Ensuring that all employees and managers are fully aware of and comply with civil rights policies is difficult in a large, decentralized organization. However, building on the historic progress made in recent years, USDA will continue its journey to becoming a Federal civil rights leader. One key focus will be on building a workforce for the future that reflects the diversity of this country and USDA customers (see chart). With adequate resources, USDA will become a better place to work and customers who were underserved in the past will receive quality service in the future – service that proves USDA is a 21st century "people's department."

Within the Department, work is underway on the establishment of USDA employee civil rights advisory councils. Two such employee advisory councils currently exist – one for Hispanic employees and one for employees with disabilities. Charters are being established for five other groups – African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, women, and gays and lesbians. These councils will give each protected group a means to share concerns and provide advice directly to the Secretary, and a way for the Secretary to make policy that takes into account the perspectives of each group. These councils will be supported by an overarching Diversity Council, comprised of two representatives from each of the employee councils, to harmonize the advice of the councils and provide consistent policy direction. The Councils will begin meeting early in FY 2001.

## Building a True "People's Department"

*Despite USDA's downsizing, the Department's overall diversity is growing, improving its ability to better serve all customers.*

Current Workforce FY 1999		New Hires FY 1999	
White female	31.7%	White female	37.4%
White male	48.3%	White male	37.2%
African American female	6.7%	African American female	10.9%
African American male	4.1%	African American male	4.2%
Hispanic female	1.8%	Hispanic female	2.7%
Hispanic male	3.0%	Hispanic male	2.9%
Asian American female	0.8%	Asian American female	1.6%
Asian American male	1.2%	Asian American male	1.7%
American Indian female	1.0%	American Indian female	0.8%
American Indian male	1.5%	American Indian male	0.6%
People with disabilities	7.9%	People with disabilities	9.8%
Targeted (more severe)	1.2%	Targeted (more severe)	1.7%

Source: USDA Office of Civil Rights, 1999.

### Key Outcome Measures:

Conduct civil rights impact analyses of all USDA regulations to assess impacts on under-served customers.

- Baseline: In 2000, civil rights impact analyses were conducted on new regulations or as current regulations were submitted for amendment.

**Target: Maintain 100% civil rights impact analyses on all new regulations and amended USDA regulations.**

Provide full and equal access to USDA programs in a discrimination-free environment.

- Baseline: In 2000, 20% of USDA programs underwent civil rights compliance reviews.

**Target: Every major USDA program is reviewed no less than every 5 years.**

Establish in every agency effective outreach programs that target underserved customers.

- Baseline: In 1999, each USDA agency created a plan to reach out to underserved customers.

**Target: In 2001 and future years, each agency will have acted on its outreach plan and experienced an improvement in minority participation in USDA programs. The target will be maintained every year through FY 2005.**

Ensure timely resolution of program and equal employment civil rights complaints.

- Baseline: In 1998, processing times were 243 days for program complaints and 348 days for employment complaints.

**Target: By 2001, reduce processing time every year for both program and employment complaints to less than 180 days by FY 2005.**

***Long-term Strategies:***

- Review fairness and equity of USDA program delivery and its impact on socially disadvantaged customers.
- Work with historically Black colleges and universities, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the Native American institutions, and other universities with substantial minority enrollment, to encourage their participation in USDA programs and activities and encourage minority students to pursue careers in the food and agricultural sciences.
- Conduct civil rights evaluations to hold each mission area and senior USDA managers accountable.
- Enhance outreach programs to socially disadvantaged customers.
- Continually monitor civil rights activities to identify violations and ensure appropriate remedies.
- Enforce Executive orders, “Congressional mandates,” and other laws, rules, and regulations related to civil rights.
- Maintain effective systems to process both program and employment complaints of discrimination.

***Resource Needs:***

To achieve its civil rights goals, USDA will need to conduct appropriate civil rights training for all USDA employees, to fulfill information technology needs, to train civil rights staff, and to hire additional personnel to process discrimination complaints in a more timely fashion. In addition, a number of legislative actions are necessary to thoroughly address the reforms proposed by the Secretary. These legislative proposals aim to address: needed changes to USDA farm loan and other programs, the civil rights accountability of non-Federal USDA employees, and funding equity for 1890 and 1994 land-grant universities.

***External Factors:***

Budget constraints will affect USDA’s ability to provide civil rights training, enhance outreach efforts, and staff the Office of Civil Rights. Also, failure to pass appropriate legislation changes would impede USDA’s civil rights progress and result in a failure to seize specific and substantial opportunities for USDA to improve the equity of its service to socially disadvantaged Americans.

**Objective 5.2:****Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.**

Rapid changes in technology have raised customers’ expectations for more, better, faster, and cheaper service in every facet of their lives. They expect no less from USDA. About 30% of farmers use the Internet, and nearly half of them use a computer for their farm business. These numbers will grow. Delivering government services through technology or “e-Government” represents a fundamental change in the way USDA conducts business. It will transform interactions with customers, employees, and partners and create the potential for vastly more efficient and less costly business practices.

Although e-Government is the key to improving service delivery, automation requires significant upfront investments that are difficult to afford. Many of USDA’s information systems are rapidly becoming obsolete, and upgrading or replacing them is an expensive proposition. In addition, many rural Americans, socially disadvantaged farmers, and other customers have yet to see the benefits of technology. USDA must work to bring that technology to customers as well as improve its own capacity to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century government services. A key to the latter is the development of Department-wide information systems

for areas such as financial management, telecommunications, payroll, and procurement that will provide the timely, consistent, and reliable information needed to effectively manage USDA's resources.

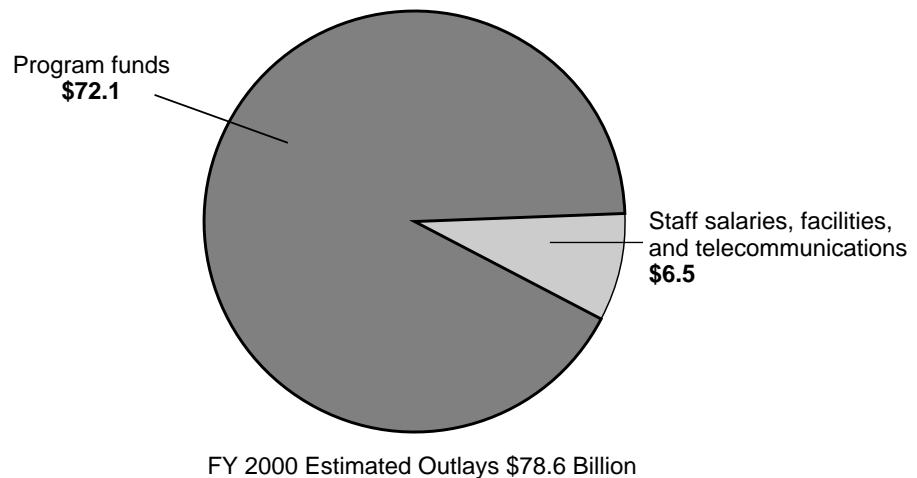
If USDA is to leverage the power of technology to deliver a range of services, its employees must be highly skilled. Unfortunately, USDA is facing a potential "brain drain." By 2005, 77% of the Department's senior executives will be eligible for regular retirement and another 17% could take early retirement. This is one of the highest retirement eligibility rates in the Federal Government. As USDA jobs become increasingly technical, skill gaps are emerging in key areas, such as information technology. As current workers retire and new workers are hired, USDA must ensure that it maintains and builds a talented, flexible, and diverse workforce.

Recognizing the correlation between employee and customer satisfaction, the Department must ensure that its employees have the tools and work environment needed to serve customers effectively, including sound leadership, efficient work processes, modern and safe places to work, fair treatment, and adequate incentives for performance, customer service, teamwork, and innovation. Productive employees and modern technology also require adequate facilities. However, many of USDA's current facilities can neither accommodate new technologies nor fully provide for the safety and security of the Department's employees and customers. Another area in which customer expectations have been raised is that of environmental performance. Whether it is energy consumption, paper recycling, waste management, ozone-depleting substances, or any other environmental issue, the public expects Federal agencies to lead by example. The heart of USDA efforts will be its environmental management system. The purpose of this system is providing the values and structure within which activities can be carried out consistently, efficiently, and in furtherance of our goal of "world-class" environmental performance.

Difficult tradeoffs need to be made between investments in programs and the infrastructure improvements needed to support them. Wherever possible, USDA has streamlined its administrative structure to ensure that maximum resources are devoted to programs. Agencies have been consolidated, offices closed, and staffing levels reduced. Nearly one-third of the county field offices that existed in 1994 are now closed, and USDA's total staffing levels declined by 17% between 1993 and 1999. At the same time, USDA is expected to do significantly more work. For example, at USDA agencies providing loans and other services to rural residents, staff size has declined by about 28% since 1993. At the same time, these agencies administered a 51% increase in program dollars. So infrastructure needs are becoming more pronounced and must be addressed with adequate funding and effective leadership (see chart).

## A Focus on the Customer

*More than 90 percent of USDA funds are used to provide payments and direct assistance to the Department's customers, such as aid to farmers, nutrition assistance, and loans and grants. The remaining amount covers salaries and related expenses for personnel, such as meat, poultry and egg inspectors, research scientists, forest rangers, and program managers.*



Source: FY 2001 President's Budget.

Following are high-level outcomes USDA will track to gauge progress in improving organizational performance and productivity. The strategic plans of USDA's agencies and Departmental offices offer further details on USDA's efforts to improve infrastructure and service, including plans to address major management challenges in areas such as farm loan delinquencies, financial management, and telecommunications (see Appendix A for information on obtaining these plans).

### Key Outcome Measures:

USDA will have the information systems needed to allow customers to securely and confidently share data and receive services electronically.

- Baseline: Although USDA agencies currently make many documents available online, customers, for the most part, cannot file or submit information to USDA electronically.  
**Target:** *USDA will have a secure electronic filing and retrieval system for the Risk Management Agency (by the end of 2001) and the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development (by the end of 2002) that will enable customers to file all required paperwork electronically and access all current publications over the Internet. All USDA agencies will make products and services available online, as practicable, by the end of 2003.*

USDA will have a financial information system that can produce auditable financial statements and provide reliable and useful information for decision-making.

- Baseline: In 1999, the Department could not provide a set of financial statements that passed the scrutiny of an independent audit, meaning its financial data systems could not provide reliable data for decision-making.  
**Target:** *In 2003, the Department will receive a clean audit of its financial statements and have a financial information system in place to provide reliable and useful information for decision-making.*



USDA will have a skilled, satisfied workforce and strong prospects for retention of its best employees.

- Baseline: In 1999, 63% of USDA employees said that they were satisfied with their work – which is 3% higher than the National Partnership for Reinventing Government average and 1% higher than private industry.

***Target: By 2005, the percent of USDA employees who say they are satisfied with their work will be 8 percentage points over the then current Government-wide average.***

USDA will have a facilities environmental management system that can produce reliable data on our environmental performance.

- Baseline: In 1999, internal USDA facility inspections and program reviews do not produce consistent data on environmental performance.

***Target: By 2003, all USDA agencies will implement environmental management systems and publish reliable reports on the environmental performance of their facilities and programs.***

### ***Long-term Strategies:***

- Use and effectively manage modern telecommunications and computer systems, such as the USDA Service Centers' common computing environment, that allow customers to do business with USDA electronically.
- Streamline agency business processes and paperwork requirements and adapt them to an electronic environment.
- Complete the implementation of the Foundation Financial Information System, which complies with Federal accounting standards, and the financial data warehouse that provides real-time access to key financial and program data.
- Redesign administrative systems and policies, such as those for loan processing, to ensure that they provide timely and reliable data.
- Modernize the way USDA pays and collects money.
- Establish corporate, Department-wide information systems for functional areas, with a priority on financial management, telecommunications, procurement, and payroll systems, that provide consistent and timely information to help managers make sound decisions and provide accountability to Congress and taxpayers.
- Increase the use of student employment programs and internships to recruit and develop a more representative workforce for critical professional and administrative occupations, expand employees' access to quality training and continuing education through technology, build employee commitment to achieving strategic results, and make appropriate use of strategic compensation tools and incentives.
- Provide safe, modern workplaces and family-friendly policies so employees are more satisfied and productive.
- Put in place environmental management systems and energy and water conservation programs on all USDA facilities.

### ***Resource Needs:***

USDA will need to attract, develop, and retain personnel with a range of skills, such as financial management, procurement, human resources, information technology, and environmental performance assessment. Department-wide information systems will require significant upfront investments. USDA must also complete the deployment of its common computing environment to improve service and interact with customers electronically. Aging facilities must be replaced or modernized so that new technologies can be used, customers and employees are safe, and facilities are operated cost effectively.

***Key External Factors:***

The uncertainty of the annual budget process makes it difficult to carry out multi-year systems development and upgrade efforts, such as the common computing environment. Demand for information technology professionals as well as other key professionals is very high, and USDA has limited ability to compete with the attractive salaries offered by the private sector. Mitigating these factors are: USDA's Capital Planning and Investment Control Program, which ensures that requested technology investments reflect departmental priorities and advances in technology; and the ability to offer recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and increased pay in some cases. Additionally, Congress may legislate changes to civil service law, such as total compensation reform and alternative personnel systems, to make it easier to lure top talent into government service. USDA also will work with Congress to establish priorities for major systems investments and seek innovative ways to reduce their costs and finance them.

## Appendix A: Overview of USDA Agencies and Offices

### ***Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS) Mission Area***

The Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area, comprised of the Farm Service Agency, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Risk Management Agency, helps keep America's farmers and ranchers in business as they face the uncertainties of weather and markets. They deliver commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, and emergency assistance programs that help improve the stability and strength of the agricultural economy. FFAS contributes to the vitality of the farm sector with programs that encourage the expansion of export markets for U.S. agriculture. In cooperation with the private sector, this mission area offers broad-based crop insurance programs and other risk management tools.

- **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** helps ensure the well-being of U.S. agriculture through efficient and equitable administration of farm commodity programs; farm operating, ownership, and emergency loans; conservation and environmental programs; emergency and disaster assistance; domestic and international food assistance; and international export credit programs. These programs are major components of USDA's farm safety net, which helps producers maintain viable operations, compete for export sales of commodities, and contribute to the year-round availability of low-cost, safe, and nutritious foods.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** FSA was established when USDA was reorganized under the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, P. L. 103-354.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

- **Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)** opens, expands, and maintains global market opportunities through international trade, cooperation, and sustainable development activities, which secure the long-term economic vitality and global competitiveness of American agriculture. FAS monitors and assesses global food aid needs and promotes international agricultural trade policies that provide market access for U.S. agricultural commodities. FAS maintains an international field structure which includes Agricultural Counselors, Attaché and Affiliate Foreign National Offices, Agricultural Trade Offices, and a number of agricultural advisors covering several countries around the world. FAS also administers a variety of export promotion, technical, and food assistance programs in cooperation with other government agencies, the private sector, and international organizations.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** FAS was created in 1953, by Secretary's Memorandum No. 1320, Supplement 1. P. L. 83-690, approved in 1954, transferred the agricultural attachés from the State Department to USDA. These memoranda were consolidated in Title 5 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.fas.usda.gov>

- **Risk Management Agency (RMA)** provides agricultural producers with the opportunity to achieve financial stability through effective risk management tools. The primary goal of RMA is to foster, at reasonable cost, an environment of financial stability, safety, and confidence, enabling the American agricultural producer to manage the perils associated with nature and markets. The private sector crop insurance industry markets, delivers, and services many USDA risk management products. RMA also provides educational opportunities to help producers choose appropriate risk management tools. RMA works

with the Farm Service Agency, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and other private and public organizations to provide producers with an effective farm safety net.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, P.L. 104-127, signed in 1996; the Federal Crop Insurance Act, 7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq. of 1938; the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-224).

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.rma.usda.gov>

### ***Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS) Mission Area***

The Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services mission area works to harness the Nation's agricultural abundance to end hunger and improve nutrition and health in the United States. It operates through two agencies, the Food and Nutrition Service, which administers the Federal domestic nutrition assistance programs, and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, which links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers through science-based dietary guidance, nutrition policy coordination, and nutrition education and promotion.

- **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)** works to increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people with access to food, a healthy diet, and nutrition education in a manner that supports U.S. agriculture and inspires public confidence in the Nation's domestic nutrition assistance programs. FNS nutrition assistance programs represent over nearly half of USDA's budget. These programs operate through partnerships with State and local organizations. The largest FNS programs are the Food Stamp Program, the Child Nutrition Programs, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. FNS works closely with other USDA agencies, such as the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency, to provide commodities to low-income Americans. The agency also works with the Agricultural Research Service to monitor the eating habits of program participants.

**Authorizing Legislation:** FNS programs are operated pursuant to a number of statutory authorities, including the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act; the Child Nutrition Act of 1966; the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973; the Food Stamp Act of 1977; and the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>

- **Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP)** develops and promotes science-based dietary guidance and economic information for consumers and professionals in health, education, industry, and media. Composed of nutritionists, economists, dietitians, and nutrition educators, CNPP develops integrated nutrition research, education, and promotion programs, and is a recognized authority for providing science-based dietary guidance for the American public and for policy development.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The mission and goal of the Center are implicitly authorized by the Organic Act of 1863, and the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990. CNPP was established in 1994 pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between FNCS and the Research, Education, and Economics mission areas.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp>

### ***Food Safety Mission Area***

The Food Safety Mission Area ensures that the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged. The mission area also plays a key role in the President's Council on Food Safety and has been instrumental in coordinating a National food safety strategic plan among various partner agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others.

- **Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)** sets standards for food safety and inspects meat, poultry, and egg products produced domestically and imported. The Service inspects animals and birds at slaughter and processed products at various stages of the production process, and analyzes products for microbiological and chemical adulterants. FSIS also informs the public about meat, poultry, and egg product food safety issues. FSIS works with the Research, Education and Economics mission area on food safety research issues and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on instances where animal diseases impact food safety. FSIS also facilitates the management of U.S. activities pertaining to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international organization created by the United Nations, to promote the health and economic interests of consumers while encouraging fair international trade in food. FAS supports FSIS in food safety discussions in the food export market.

**Authorizing Legislation:** FSIS was established by the Secretary of Agriculture in 1981, pursuant to legislative authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 which permits the Secretary to issue regulations governing USDA. Its work is carried out under the authority of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

### ***Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Mission Area***

The Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area facilitates the domestic and international marketing of U.S. agricultural products and ensures the health and care of animals and plants. MRP agencies are active participants in international and National standards setting, through international organizations and Federal-State cooperation. Three agencies operate under the MRP mission area: the Agricultural Marketing Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

- **Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)** facilitates the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international markets, while ensuring fair trading practices and promoting a competitive and efficient marketplace. AMS constantly works to develop new marketing services to increase customer satisfaction. Toward this end, AMS works closely with the Foreign Agricultural Service in international marketing; with the Farm Service Agency on strategic domestic marketing; and with the Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services mission area; National Agricultural Statistics Service; and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service on outreach and education.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, the Cotton Statistics and Estimates Act of 1927, and the Tobacco Inspection Act.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.ams.usda.gov>

- **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)** protects America's animal and plant resources by safeguarding these resources from exotic invasive pests and diseases, monitoring and managing pests and diseases existing in the U.S., resolving trade issues related to animal and plant health, and ensuring the humane care and treatment of animals. APHIS works closely with the Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services mission area to maintain or expand access to foreign markets, with the Food Safety and Inspection Service on food safety issues, with agencies in the National Resources and Environment mission area on invasive species and other environmental issues, and with the Agricultural Research Service on the application of science and technology to the full range of agency services.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The principal legislative authorities for these activities include the Organic Act of 1944, the Plant Protection Act (as contained in the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000), Sections 12-14 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Bureau of Animal Industry Act of 1884, Tariff Act of June 17, 1930, the Animal Damage Control Act of 1931, Animal Welfare Act of 1966, the Horse Protection Act of 1970, and Virus Serum Toxin Act of 1913. Several laws authorize the collection of user fees for agricultural quarantine inspection and other APHIS services.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>

- **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)** facilitates the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products, and promotes fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture. GIPSA ensures open and competitive markets for livestock, poultry, and meat by investigating and monitoring industry trade practices. GIPSA also provides Federal grading standards and a National inspection and weighing system for grain and oilseeds. GIPSA works closely with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service, and the Agricultural Research Service to facilitate international marketing, with the Office of Inspector General on investigative matters, and with the Agricultural Marketing Service to obtain feedback from customers.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The United States Grain Standards Act; the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946; and the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa>

### ***Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Mission Area***

The goal of the Natural Resources and Environment mission area is to ensure the health of the land through sustainable management. To achieve this goal, NRE agencies work to: prevent damage to natural resources and the environment; restore the resource base and environment to a healthy and sustainable condition where it is impaired; and promote good land management to conserve resource health and ensure the maximum return from investment in conservation. NRE is composed of the Forest Service (FS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Both agencies also assist with rural development and help communities with natural resource concerns, such as erosion control, watershed protection, and forestry.

- **Forest Service (FS)** sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of the 191 million acres of National Forests and Grasslands. These areas provide multiple benefits to the country, from traditional commodities such as timber, range, forage, and minerals, to opportunities for recreation. Through the land and resource management planning process, this agency addresses the sustainability of ecosystems by restoring and maintaining species diversity and ecological productivity to provide for recreation, range, water, timber, fish, and wildlife. Through technical and financial help, the Forest Service also assists States and private landowners in promoting rural economic development, improving the natural environment of cities and communities, and practicing good stewardship on the Nation's 472 million acres of private forestland. The agency uses the best available scientific data to achieve its goals. Domestic and international activities are directed at values, products, and services that maintain ecosystem health.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Organic Administrative Act of 1897; the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act, P.L. 86-517; the National Forest Management Act, P.L. 94-588; the National Environmental Policy Act, P.L. 91-190; the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, P.L. 95-313; and the Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Planning Act, P.L. 95-307.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.fs.fed.us>

- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides National leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, improve, and sustain America's natural resources and environment. NRCS provides leadership for conservation activities on the Nation's 1.6 billion acres of private and other non-Federal land. This agency provides technical assistance and information to individuals; communities; tribal governments; Federal, State and local agencies; and others. The NRCS staff partners with staff of the local conservation district and state agencies and with volunteers. NRCS also offers financial assistance, surveys the Nation's soils, inventories natural resources conditions and use, provides water supply forecasts for Western States, and develops technical guidance for conservation planning. The benefits of these activities include not only sustaining and improving agricultural productivity, but also cleaner, safer, and more dependable water supplies; reduced damage caused by floods and other natural disasters; and an enhanced resource base to support continued economic development, recreation, and other purposes.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, P.L. 103-354; Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935, P.L. 74-46; Watershed and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, P.L. 83-566; Flood Control Act of 1944, P.L. 78-534; Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, P.L. 87-703, Sec. 102; Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, P.L. 97-98, Sec. 1528-1538; and Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, P.L. 104-127.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

### **Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Mission Area**

The Research, Education, and Economics mission area is dedicated to the creation of a safe, sustainable, competitive U.S. food and fiber system and strong, communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education. Through the Agricultural Research Service; the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; the Economic Research Service; and the National Agricultural Statistics Service, REE provides research, analysis, and data to benefit consumers and promote agricultural prosperity and sustainable agricultural practices.

- **Agricultural Research Service (ARS)** is USDA's principal in-house research agency. ARS works to provide the scientific knowledge and technologies needed to ensure the viability of American agriculture. It conducts research to address agricultural problems of high National priority and aggressively works to transfer research results to the marketplace, where they serve the needs of a wide range of users. The work of ARS provides the scientific base for the quality, affordability, safety, and variety of the food and agricultural products all Americans enjoy.

**Authorizing Legislation:** ARS research is authorized by the Act of 1946, P.L. 79-733, as amended (7 U.S.C., 1621 et seq.); and the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, P.L. 95-113, Title XIV as amended (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.ars.usda.gov>

- **Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)**, in partnership with land-grant universities and other public and private organizations, provides the focus to advance a global system of extramural research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences and related environmental, social, and human sciences.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Hatch Act of 1887 (7 U.S.C. 361a-361i); the Act of May 14, 1914 (the "Smith-Lever Act"), P.L. 63-95, as amended (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.); the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act, P.L. 87-788, as amended (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.); the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, P.L. 89-106, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i); the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, P.L. 95-113, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.); the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, P.L. 101-624, as amended; the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, P.L. 104-127, as amended; and the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, P.L. 105-185, as amended.

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.reeusda.gov>



- **Economic Research Service (ERS)** is USDA's principal social science research agency. Each year, ERS communicates research results and socioeconomic indicators via more than 400 briefings and analyses for policymakers and their staffs, 90 market analysis updates, and 40 major reports and via its website, which has over 2,000 hits daily.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Act of May 15, 1862, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2201); the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, P.L. 79-733, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621-27).

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.ers.usda.gov>

- **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** serves the basic agricultural and rural data needs of the country by providing objective, important, and accurate statistical information and services to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, public officials, and others. This data is vital to monitoring the ever-changing agricultural sector and carrying out farm policy. NASS keeps U.S. agriculture well informed, by providing basic data in the timely, accurate, and impartial manner necessary to keep agricultural markets stable and efficient, and it helps maintain a "level playing field" and equal access for all users of agricultural statistics.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Act of May 15, 1862, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2204) and 7 U.S.C. 476,951.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.usda.gov/nass>

### ***Rural Development (RD) Mission Area***

Rural Development programs enhance the ability of rural communities to develop, grow, and improve their quality of life by targeting financial and technical resources to areas of greatest need, through activities of greatest potential. The Rural Development mission area consists of three agencies plus the Office of Community Development, which administers the Administration's rural Enterprise Zones/Enterprise Communities initiative, and the National Rural Development Partnership, a Nationwide network of rural development leaders and officials committed to the vitality of rural areas.

- **Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)** enhances the quality of life in rural areas by providing financing and technical assistance to help build competitive businesses and establish and sustain agricultural cooperatives that can prosper in the global marketplace.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act; the Cooperative Marketing Act of 1926; and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs>

- **Rural Housing Service (RHS)** helps build competitive, vibrant rural communities by providing financing and technical help for needed community facilities and housing for very-low to moderate-income areas.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Housing Act of 1949 and the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs>

- **Rural Utilities Service (RUS)** serves a leading role in improving the quality of life in rural America by providing financial and technical assistance so rural areas can have modern affordable electricity, telecommunications (including distance learning and telemedicine), public water, and waste removal services.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Rural Electrification Administration Act of 1936; the Rural Economic Development Act of 1990; and the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus>

### **Offices**

Department-level offices provide centralized leadership, coordination, and support for the policy and administrative functions of the Department, helping program agencies deliver services to all USDA customers and stakeholders.

- **Departmental Administration (DA)** provides central administrative management support to Department officials, and overall coordination of USDA's administrative programs and services. The functions or services include human resources, ethics, civil rights, small and disadvantaged business use, procurement and property management, facilities operations, emergency preparedness, energy efficiency, outreach, certain judicial functions. DA also administers hazardous materials programs.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Act of February 9, 1889 (7 U.S.C. 2202).

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.usda.gov/da>

- **National Appeals Division (NAD)** conducts impartial administrative appeal hearings of adverse program decisions made by USDA and conducts reviews of determinations issued by NAD hearing officers when requested by a party to the appeal. Operating as an independent agency, NAD handles all administrative appeals arising from program activities or decisions of the Farm Service Agency, the Risk Management Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development mission area.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** NAD was established in 1994 by Secretary's Memorandum 1010-1, pursuant to the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, P. L. 103-354, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6991 et seq.).

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.nad.usda.gov>

- **Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA)** provides centralized coordination and direction for the Department's budget, legislative, and regulatory functions, and provides analysis and evaluation to support the implementation of critical policies. OBPA administers the Department's budgetary functions, including development and presentation of budget-related matters to the Congress, the news media, and the public. OBPA reviews program and legislative proposals for program- and budget-related implications, analyzes program and resource issues and alternatives, and prepares summaries of pertinent data to aid Departmental policy officials and agency program managers in the decision-making process.

**Authorizing Legislation:** OBPA was established in 1981. OBPA's predecessor organization was established in 1922, by Secretary's Memorandum No. 389, under the provisions of the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, P.L. 67-13, as amended (see, e.g., 31 U.S.C. 3521).

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.usda.gov/agency/obpa/Home-Page/obpa.html>

- **Office of the Chief Economist (OCE)** advises the Secretary on the economic situation in agricultural markets and the economic implications of policies and programs affecting American agriculture and rural communities. OCE serves as the focal point for economic intelligence and analysis related to agricultural markets and for risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis related to Departmental regulations affecting food and agriculture. The World Agricultural Outlook Board coordinates the agricultural data used to develop agricultural situation and outlook information. The Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis helps ensure effective and efficient regulation, including regulation of hazards to human health, safety, and the environment. The Office of Energy Policy and New Uses coordinates research and analysis on energy policy issues. The Global Change Program Office coordinates global change research and analysis.

**Authorizing Legislation:** OCE was created by the Secretary in 1994, under authority of the Federal Crop Insurance Reform and Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, P.L. 103-354, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.). The Office of Energy Policy and New Uses was established in OCE as required by the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998, P.L. 105-185, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6920).

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.usda.gov/oce>

- **Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)** shapes an environment in which USDA officials have and use high-quality financial and performance information to make and implement effective policy, management, stewardship, and program decisions. In partnership with the mission areas, OCFO prepares the consolidated financial statements, monitors Department-wide audit findings and resolutions, administers the debt-collection processes and policies, works with credit agencies to implement credit reform initiatives, directs the Department's strategic planning process, and establishes Department-wide skill-level standards for the financial management personnel. OCFO's National Finance Center in New Orleans provides payroll and accounting services to USDA and other Federal agencies, operates financial and administrative systems for USDA, and serves as the recordkeeper for the Federal Government's Thrift Savings Plan, a 401(k)-type retirement fund with 2.4 million participants.

**Authorizing Legislation:** The OCFO was established by the Secretary to meet the mandates of the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, P.L. 101-576 (31 U.S.C. 901 et seq.).

**Home Page Address:** <http://www.usda.gov/ocfo>

- **Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)** serves USDA agencies and has primary responsibility for supervision and coordination of the design, acquisition, maintenance, use, and disposal of information technology by USDA agencies. OCIO's mission is to strategically acquire and use information and technology resources to improve the quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of USDA service delivery to its customers. OCIO's vision is better government through effective use of information, people, and technology.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996, P.L. 104-106, (40 U.S.C. 1421 et seq., 1492, 1501).

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.ocio.usda.gov>

- **Office of Communications (OC)** provides leadership, coordination, expertise, and counsel for the development of consistent and timely communications strategies, products, and services that describe USDA initiatives, programs, and functions, so that the widest scope of Americans have information that is helpful in their everyday lives. OC is the central source of public information. The office responds to mission area and agency communications needs by providing centralized information services using the latest, most effective and efficient technology and standards for graphic design, photography, video and audio tape production, teleconferencing, printing, and other communications products and services.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Office of Communications was established in 1994 by Secretary's Memorandum 1020-40, as a successor to the Office of Public Affairs. OC follows a mandate established by the Secretary of Agriculture in 1913 to centralize information services of the Department.

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.usda.gov/agencies/ocpage.htm>

- **Office of the General Counsel (OGC)** determines legal policy and directs the performance of all legal work conducted by the Department. The wide diversity of programs within USDA generates demand for a broad range of legal services. In delivering these services, OGC provides legal advice to Department officials; reviews regulations, correspondence, contracts, agreements, and other documents; and participates in the prosecution or defense of litigation involving agencies or Department officials.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** The Act of July 31, 1956, P.L. 84-854, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2214).

- **Office of Inspector General (OIG)** conducts audits, investigations, and evaluations of USDA programs and operations to effect positive changes. OIG responds to issues most critical to Department operations – preventing fraud and abuse by providing quality audit and investigative services, strengthening management and financial controls in USDA, and enhancing the economy and efficiency of the audit and investigative processes through the use of innovative techniques.

***Authorizing Legislation:*** USDA, OIG operates under authority established with the enactment of the Inspector General Act of 1978, P.L. 95-452, as amended, and the 1988 amendments to the Act, P.L. 100-504 (5 U.S.C. App.).

***Home Page Address:*** <http://www.usda.gov/oig/index.html>

## Appendix B: How USDA Measures Results

USDA uses a variety of tools to measure the progress it makes toward achieving its strategic goals. This appendix briefly explains these tools, provides an overview of recent and planned strategic evaluations, and discusses the capacity and shortcoming of the data used to set the performance targets included in this Strategic Plan.

- ***Tools for Evaluation***

USDA uses a variety of tools to assess and enhance the impact of its efforts and to encourage more effective and efficient day-to-day management of Department programs. These tools include:

- ***Program Evaluations*** - USDA agencies perform varying amounts and types of program effectiveness evaluations, depending on the nature and needs of the program. For example, USDA regularly measures the impact of the Department's food and nutrition programs on low-income families.
- ***Advisory Committees*** - USDA receives input on its programs and operations through its many advisory committees. These committees typically are made up of customers and other stakeholders affected by USDA programs and services. As an example, the National Commission on Small Farms recently released a report card on the Department's progress in improving policies related to small farming operations.
- ***Inspector General, General Accounting Office, and Other External Reviews*** - The USDA Inspector General, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and other external reviewers make recommendations to USDA on a variety of program and management issues. USDA reports its progress in addressing their recommendations in its semiannual Secretary's Management Report to Congress and the annual Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act Report. Also, senior Department officials also routinely receive external feedback when they meet with members of Congress and the public.
- ***Internal Management Studies and Performance Measurement Systems*** - USDA agencies conduct ad-hoc reviews to respond to specific issues. The agencies also have performance measurement systems to help them evaluate results. For example, USDA launched a Capital Planning and Investment Control process to help ensure that its capital investments come in on time, and on budget and that they achieve intended goals.

- ***Recent Strategic Evaluations***

Although there are far too many evaluations to list individually, following are some significant evaluations that affected the strategies presented in this plan:

- ***Safeguarding American Plant Resources*** - Issued in July 1999 by the National Plant Board, this evaluation developed recommendations for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's system to safeguard plants from pests. The recommendations addressed four major areas: protecting plants from pests, international information, pest permits, and pest detection and response. Stakeholders from States, industry, academia, and environmental groups were consulted. Through extensive research, interviews, site visits, and other interactions with USDA, the Board suggested reforms to enhance the safeguarding system.

- *Renewable Resources Assessment* - Prepared by the USDA Forest Service, this periodic report examines the status of and trends affecting natural resources and their management on all forest and range lands in the United States. This report is used to identify needs and opportunities regarding the Nation's natural resources, and includes evaluations conducted within the framework of internationally accepted criteria and indicators for sustainable resource management.
- *Climate Change Impacts on the United States* - Issued in June 2000 by the U.S. Global Change Research Program, this Federal report contains projections of the likely effects of global warming over the next century and is being used to help understand and plan for the effects of climate change.
- *Preparing for Drought in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* - Issued in May 2000 by the National Drought Policy Commission, this report presents recommendations on ways to improve National drought policy, including Federal coordination efforts.
- *Civil Rights at the United States Department of Agriculture* - Issued in February 1997 by the USDA Civil Rights Action Team, this report contained numerous recommendations to ensure that the Department's customers and employees are treated fairly and equitably. While most recommendations already have been acted on, this Strategic Plan addresses the remaining issues.
- *A Time to Act* - Issued in January 1998 by the National Commission on Small Farms, this report examined the status of small farms in the United States and made recommendations aimed at improving USDA's responsiveness to the needs of small farming and ranching operations through changes in policy, practices, and programs.
- ***Planned Strategic Evaluations***  
 USDA will be undertaking many new evaluations over the next 5 years. Information about these evaluations is periodically published in the USDA Study Agenda. The following table highlights some of the longer term studies as they related to USDA's strategic goals.

Study Title	Study Objectives	Estimated Completion Date
<b>All Goals</b>		
Evaluating the Quality, Role, and Mission of Federally Funded Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education	Evaluate the quality of USDA research, education, and extension activities to assess current efforts, identify future research opportunities and strengthen research capabilities that address National needs.	September 2002
<b>Goal 1</b>		
Commission on 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Agriculture	Review changes in the condition of U.S. production agriculture since the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996; determine the extent to which the legislation effected these changes, and review the future of U.S. production agriculture and the appropriate role of the Federal Government in farm policy.	January 2001

<b>Study Title</b>	<b>Study Objectives</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Comprehensive Evaluation of the Monetization of Food Aid Commodities	Assess the benefits achieved through the sale of commodities under U.S. and foreign aid programs.	Spring 2001
Animal Health Safeguarding Review	Assess the performance and efficacy of the organizational infrastructure, activities, procedures, and policies that comprise the existing U.S. animal health safeguarding system.	March 2001
<b>Goal 2</b>		
Assessing Medicaid and Food Stamp Program Access and Participation	Assess barriers to participation in Medicaid and the Food Stamp Program by low-income families.	September 2001
WIC General Analysis Projects	Analyze policy and budget issues related to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), including the impact of legislative changes on program eligibility, participation, and costs.	September 2001
Study of the Implementation of the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children	Collect data on implementation of the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children to determine progress toward school meals that meet dietary guidelines for healthy eating.	Spring 2001
Universal Free School Breakfast Pilot and Study	Assess the effects of free school breakfasts for all children on academic performance, absenteeism, tardiness, behavior, and cognitive development.	Spring 2004
What Explains Recent Changes in Food Stamp Program Caseloads?	Improve forecasts of fluctuations in Food Stamp Program participation.	February 2001
The Effects of Welfare Reform Implementation on Food Stamp Caseloads	Assess the impact of welfare reforms, brought about by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, on the Food Stamp caseload.	September 2002
Evaluation of Pathogen Reduction/HACCP Systems Final Rule Impact	Determine if the objectives of the Pathogen Reduction/ Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Determine extent to which the objectives of USDA's new science-based food inspection systems are being met.	September 2001

<b>Study Title</b>	<b>Study Objectives</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
<b>Goal 3</b>		
National Conservation Partnership Workload Analysis	Assess, at the local level, the long-term conservation needs, the annual workload, and the time required to complete major tasks.	March 2000 and at 3-year intervals thereafter
Urban Forest Assessment	Assess status and trends related to the extent, condition, and management of urban forests.	October 2000
Range and Timber Resource Assessments	Assess status and trends related to the extent, condition, and management of U.S. range and timber resources.	December 2000
National Survey of Recreation and the Environment	Assess trends as well as the current and likely future status of outdoor recreation and wilderness supply and demand.	Mid 2001
Forest Resources of the United States for 1997	Assess current forest inventory for all U.S. forest lands by ownership, region, and other classifications.	December 2000
Forest Service Strategic Plan Program Evaluations	Assess progress toward achieving long-term objectives based on an analysis of long-term outcome measures. Use these evaluations to recommend any necessary adjustments to long-term goals and/or strategies.	Annually, beginning November 2000
RCA-NCP: Evaluation of Conservation Issues on Non-Federal Lands	Provide a report that captures new and emerging natural resource issues and analyzes alternative scenarios for addressing these concerns.	January 2001
<b>Goal 4</b>		
Multi-Family Housing Preservation Needs	Determine the resources needed to preserve the multi-family rural housing stock.	December 2001
The Role of Cooperatives in Supporting and Enhancing Farm Policy and Contributing to the Health of Rural Economies	Examine how farming cooperatives can be more effectively used and promoted to improve the health of the farm and rural economies.	September 2001
<b>Goal 5</b>		
Audit of USDA's financial statements	Evaluate the degree to which USDA financial systems and practices produce reliable data, safeguard USDA's resources, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.	By March 1 of each year
Analysis of USDA's Information Technology Workforce	Establish profile of USDA's IT workforce to determine needs and priorities.	Fall 2000



<b>Study Title</b>	<b>Study Objectives</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>
Office of Personnel Management's Quadrennial Oversight Review	Evaluate how well USDA's human resource management practices support mission accomplishment.	Fall 2001
National Academy of Public Administration Assessment of USDA's Workforce Planning	Examine USDA's recruiting policies and identify best practices in workforce planning.	Fall 2001
National Academy of Public Administration Assessment of USDA's Workforce Planning	Examine USDA's recruiting policies and identify best practices in workforce planning.	Fall 2001

## • **Data Capacity and Limitations**

Besides conducting long-term evaluations of the impact of USDA programs, the performance targets set in this Strategic Plan also measure the effectiveness of USDA efforts. Because the Department works with a range of partners to achieve many of its goals, USDA does not always gather the data used to set the baselines and targets used in this Plan. As a result, the

Department cannot always control the timeliness and/or accuracy of this data. Where USDA does maintain the data measuring the outcomes in this plan, every effort will be made to ensure the data is timely and reliable. In the spirit of full disclosure, the table below describes the data source for each Key Outcome Measure in this Plan, along with a brief assessment of data accuracy and limitations.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Data Capacity and Limitations</b>
Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.	Farm income estimates measure farm income in a given year based on data collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the Agricultural Resource Management Study, and other National institutions.	Collected data must be evaluated, aggregated, and summarized, and may not be available until several months after the end of a given year. USDA's Economic Research Service uses the collected data to estimate actual farm income at the national and state levels.
Objective 1.2: Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture.	Data used for calculation of global market share comes from two sources: the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) AGRO-STAT database (worldwide import demand), and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, International Division trade database. Rates of participation in USDA programs are measured using program data, then compared to external National databases that estimate the number of Americans eligible for Federal food and nutrition assistance.	There is usually a 16-18 month time lag with FAO data. However, U.S. Bureau of Census trade data are very timely (1-2 months time lag) and considered to be among the most accurate compilations of trade statistics in the world.
Objective 2.1: Reduce hunger and improve nutrition among children and low-income people in the U.S.	Food security and healthy eating measures come from analysis of the Current Population Survey conducted by the Census Bureau, and Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals, conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. USDA uses reports from States, internal administrative records, and specialized systems such as the annual Quality Control statistical reporting process to measure benefit accuracy and other key funds stewardship outcomes. These resources are supplemented by special evaluations related to specific issues, such as nutritional quality of meal-based benefits, or estimates of program error.	Because several outcome measures related to Objective 2.1 come from analysis of program data, surveys, and other sources, there is a delay of 12-24 months between collection of the data and determination of the final measure. Congress also transferred funding to conduct studies away from those at USDA who administer federal food and nutrition programs. This makes efforts to collect and analyze operationally focused performance more difficult. Restoration of Food and Nutrition Service funding to conduct this work would improve measurement and evaluation of performance related to this objective.
Objective 2.2: Reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world.	Data on the level of food insecurity in 93 developing countries considered most vulnerable to food insecurity are maintained by USDA's Economic Research Service, Market and Trade Economics Division.	Data used for determining progress in reducing the number of hungry and malnourished people in the world will come from this work unit's annual "Food Security Assessment" report.

Objective	Data Source	Data Capacity and Limitations
Objective 2.3: To protect public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of foodborne hazards.	<p>USDA food safety agencies receive guidance on the data quality of its performance measures from its internal control functions. These agencies also receive external feedback on data quality from the General Accounting Office and from the Office of Management and Budget. Source data is also obtained from other food safety agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control.</p>	<p>Evaluations and case studies are performed on an as-needed basis or upon request by various departments and Federal agencies.</p>
Objective 2.4: Improve the public health through nutrition education, promotion, and research.	<p>USDA uses its Healthy Eating Index, a measure of overall diet quality based on analysis of data from the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII), to track progress on this objective. This data will be supplemented by special studies related to food consumption patterns, the impact of diet-related diseases on special populations, and other targeted issues.</p> <p>USDA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) uses data obtained from its evaluation and reporting system to measure food practice improvement and dietary improvements.</p>	<p>The CSFII, an ongoing survey, conducted by USDA's Agricultural Research Service, provides food and nutrient intake data on a representative sample of the U.S. population. Computation of the Healthy Eating Index depends on the availability of this data. USDA uses the data to estimate the quality of the overall diet of different segments of the American public.</p> <p>Annual Reports are submitted to EFNEP through its evaluation and reporting system by State Land-Grant University Extension Services, including food behavior data of participants who graduate from the program. These are not individual data, but State summaries of individual data.</p>
Objective 3.1: Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations.	<p>For the workload analysis, estimates of land managed sustainably and lands needing additional conservation treatment were made at the local level by NRCS staff and partners according to procedures defined in National guidance. Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) protocols have been evaluated by National Academy of Sciences.</p> <p>Estimates of conservation needs on non-Federal land in this plan are based on the FY 2001 National Conservation Partnership Workload Analysis conducted in FY 1999 by USDA.</p>	<p>Estimates of land managed sustainably and land needing additional conservation treatment were made at the local level by teams of NRCS staff and partners according to procedures defined in National guidance. GAO conducted a preliminary review of the new NRCS accountability systems, including the Workload Assessment, in FY 2000.</p> <p>The NRI has been conducted at 5-year intervals since 1977 by the USDA NRCS in cooperation with Iowa State University. It is conducted according to well-established protocols for quality control. NRI protocols were evaluated by the National Academy of Sciences after the first two cycles had been completed.</p>

Objective	Data Source	Data Capacity and Limitations
Objective 3.2: Protect the quality of the environment.	<p>Cropland erosion data are from the NRI, which is the primary data source for information on the use, condition, and trends on non-Federal lands. NRI data and information on the methodology for data collection, statistical design, and estimation are available at <a href="http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/NRI/">http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/NRI/</a></p>	<p>Survey protocols need to be updated to contemporary standards, with appropriate statistical validity. Statistical designs of surveys need appropriate scientific review.</p>
	<p>USDA Forest Service, Wildlife, Fisheries and Rare Plants reporting system, this data will reside in Natural Resource Information System. The Nature Conservancy and State Heritage databases are also important sources. Surveys and annual monitoring reports by National Forest System, Research, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other Federal, State, academic, and non-government sources.</p>	<p>Habitat data are readily available for most National Forests and Grasslands, but accuracy and reliability are poor to good.</p>
	<p>The data source for information on the use, condition, and trends on non-Federal lands is the NRI, conducted by USDA's NRCS in cooperation with the Iowa State University.</p>	
Objective 3.2: Protect the quality of the environment.	<p>Data on application of conservation practices on agricultural land, including animal feeding operations, buffers, and wetlands, are collected through NRCS reporting system, the Performance and Results Measurement System. Raw data and data definitions can be accessed at <a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PRMS">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PRMS</a></p>	<p>Data are entered at all NRCS offices using Nationally consistent business rules. GAO conducted a preliminary review of NRCS's new accountability system in 2000. The review did not evaluate quality of data reported to that date.</p>
	<p>The Natural Resource Information System database will be used for tracking, reporting, and summarizing changes in watershed conditions. Hydrologic Condition Assessments are the foundation for ecosystem analyses. Ecosystem analyses at the watershed scale provide adequate information to identify watershed condition protection and restoration priorities and propose projects.</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted and reported on an annual basis to measure the implementation and effectiveness of methods used to protect or improve watershed conditions. The annual accomplishments reports will be verified during Functional Assistance Trips and other program reviews at the regional level.</p>
	<p>External data sources that will be used for water quality include: EPA data at the sub-basin or larger level, as well as U.S. Geological Survey data.</p>	<p>The Hydrologic Condition Assessments will be conducted per the interagency approach for watersheds that are 40,000 – 250,000 acres in size on a 10-year cycle. Interagency training will be provided in applying the protocols for these assessments beginning in FY 2001. Regional foresters are responsible for securing the needed skills, funding, training, and quality control to complete the Hydrologic Condition Assessments.</p>

Objective	Data Source	Data Capacity and Limitations
Objective 3.3: Provide multiple benefits to people from the Nation's natural resources.	Data on quantities and values of goods and services coming from the natural resource base are collected through various current databases.	Reliable baseline data for many measures, and processes to track them in the future, do not exist and must be established. Efforts are underway to develop needed baselines and to collect related data in the future.
Objective 4.1: Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.	The outcome measures are either macroeconomic (unemployment, homeownership, and households with unsafe drinking water) or related to USDA programs. Unemployment data come from the Department of Labor; homeownership data from the Census Bureau; and households with unsafe drinking water from the 1997 American Housing Survey for the United States conducted by the Department of Commerce. Data on the number of jobs created and the number of rural residents connected to public water come from the Rural Community Facilities Tracking System, a non-accounting management system USDA uses to track data on projects it funds. Information on the number of homes financed comes from USDA accounting systems.	The data in the Rural Community Facilities Tracking System, while considered reasonably accurate to use for management purposes, is input by the field staff and does not contain edit checks to verify accuracy.  The USDA accounting systems contain edit checks, are audited annually, and the data are considered to be valid.
Objective 4.2: Ensure the neediest rural residents and communities have equal access the USDA programs that will help them succeed.	Data on assistance to local communities obtaining non-USDA funding is provided by the Rural Development State Offices. Data on assistance provided within the persistent-poverty or out-migration counties is available from USDA accounting systems.	Information from the Rural Development State Offices is not verified but are considered accurate for management purposes.  The USDA accounting systems contain edit checks, are audited, and the information is verifiable.
Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees.	The following are data collection sources for the Office of Civil Rights: • Civil Rights Impact Analysis, Affirmative Employment Plans, and compliance reviews/research will support the source of data for determining no disparate impact on socially disadvantaged customers and full access for all customers to USDA programs; • The Office of Outreach's Database Tracking System will support the source of data for effective outreach programs; and • USDA's Civil Rights Data Tracking System for Program and Employment is the source of data for proven civil rights violations.	USDA's Office of Inspector General and the General Accounting Office provide external feedback on the quality of data. All database-tracking systems have several edit checks built into the system to ensure the validity of the data. Deputy Directors for Programs and Employment meet on a monthly basis with agency Civil Rights Directors to reconcile the data-bases.
Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability and performance.	Data on employee satisfaction comes from the annual National Partnership for Reinventing Government Survey. The survey is independently administered by the Office of Personnel Management and is based on a survey used by top corporations. USDA will adopt this survey, which will provide data by specific organization and manager.	Survey data captures employee perceptions in an unbiased, valid manner that permits comparison to other Federal agencies and private organizations.



## Appendix C: How Agency-level Strategies Support Department-wide Goals

Underpinning this Strategic Plan are the long-term plans of each USDA agency and office. They cover the same 5-year outlook and include strategies that support the Department's five broad goals. The following chart details how agency and Departmental office goals serve the objectives included in this

USDA Strategic Plan. For additional information, please refer to agency strategic plans, which are available at the Internet addresses listed in Appendix A.

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services Mission Area														
Farm Service Agency														
Goal 1	Provide farm income support to eligible producers, cooperatives, and associations to help improve the economic stability and viability of the agricultural sector and to ensure the production of an adequate and reasonably priced supply of food and fiber.	■		■										
Goal 2	Assist agricultural producers and landowners in achieving a high level of stewardship of soil, water, air, and wildlife resources on America's farmland and ranches.	■						■		■				
Goal 3	Assist eligible individuals and families in becoming successful farmers and ranchers.	■												
Goal 4	Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of FSA's commodity acquisition, procurement, storage, and distribution activities to support domestic and international food assistance programs, and administer the U.S. Warehouse Act.	■		■	■									
Goal 5	Improve organizational performance.												■	■
Foreign Agricultural Service														
Goal 1	Expand export opportunities for U.S. agricultural, fish, and forest products.		■											
Goal 2	Promote world food security.				■	■	■							
Goal 3	Improve program delivery of customer services.												■	■
Risk Management Agency														
Goal 1	Strengthen the safety net for agricultural producers through sound risk management programs and education.	■												

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area	Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Mission Area	GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion														
Goal 1	Improve nutrition and well-being of Americans.						■							
Food and Nutrition Service														
Goal 1	Improve nutrition for children and low-income people.			■										
Goal 2	Improve stewardship of Federal funds.												■	■
Food Safety Mission Area														
Food Safety and Inspection Service														
Goal 1	Enhance the public health by minimizing foodborne illness from meat, poultry, and egg products.						■							
Marketing and Regulatory Programs Mission Area														
Agricultural Marketing Service														
Goal 1	Facilitate the strategic marketing of U.S. agricultural products in domestic and international markets.		■											
Goal 2	Ensure fair and competitive agricultural marketing through marketing tools and regulations.		■				■							
Goal 3	Create and maintain a vital workforce with the appropriate skills and characteristics to serve a diverse base of customers.												■	
Goal 4	Encourage and reward prudent financial stewardship, accountability, and improved business operations.													■
Goal 5	Research and implement appropriate cost-effective electronic business technologies.													■
Goal 6	Increase information security.													■



LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service														
Goal 1	Safeguard U.S. animal and plant resources against introductions of exotic invasive pests and diseases, while meeting international trade obligations.	■	■			■								
Goal 2	Minimize agricultural production losses and export market disruptions by quickly detecting and responding to new invasive agricultural pests and diseases or other emerging agricultural health situations.	■	■			■			■					
Goal 3	Minimize risks to agricultural production, natural resources, and human health and safety by effectively managing existing agricultural pests and diseases and wildlife damage in the U.S.	■	■			■			■					
Goal 4	Ensure the humane care and treatment of animals covered under the Animal Welfare Act and various laws protecting horses.		■											
Goal 5	Develop and apply scientific methods that benefit agricultural producers and consumers, protect the health of American animal and plant resources, and sustain agricultural ecosystems.	■	■			■			■					
Goal 6	Serve the public effectively and efficiently.												■	■
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration														
Goal 1	Ensure a fair, open and competitive marketing environment for livestock, meat, and poultry.	■	■											
Goal 2	Facilitate the marketing of U.S. grain for the benefit of American agriculture.		■											
Goal 3	Maintain a work environment that supports cultural diversity, civil rights, and continuous improvement.												■	
Goal 4	Ensure prudent financial management throughout the Agency.													■

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3				GOAL 4		GOAL 5
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
<b>Natural Resources and Environment Mission Area</b>														
<b>Forest Service</b>														
Goal 1	Promote ecosystem health and conservation using a collaborative approach to sustain the Nation's forests, grasslands, and watersheds.								■					
Goal 2	Provide a variety of uses, values, products, and services to present and future generations by managing within the capability of sustainable ecosystems.								■					
Goal 3	Develop and use the best scientific information available to deliver technical and community assistance and to support ecological, economic, and social sustainability.								■	■		■		
Goal 4	Ensure the acquisition and use of an appropriate corporate infrastructure to enable the efficient delivery of a variety of uses.												■	■
<b>Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>														
Goal 1	Enhance natural resource productivity to enable a strong agricultural and natural resource sector.	■							■				■	
Goal 2	Reduce unintended adverse effects of natural resource development and use to ensure a high quality environment.								■		■		■	
Goal 3	Reduce risks from flooding and drought to protect public health and safety.	■							■	■	■		■	
Goal 4	Deliver high quality services to the public to enable natural resource stewardship.												■	■

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3				GOAL 4	GOAL 5	
Research, Education and Economics Mission Area		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Agricultural Research Service														
Goal 1	To promote an agricultural food and fiber system that is productive and highly competitive in the global economy.		■											
Goal 2	To promote a safe and secure food and fiber system.					■								
Goal 3	To promote a healthy population through improved nutrition.						■							
Goal 4	To foster an agricultural system that protects natural resources and the environment.							■	■					
Goal 5	To increase the capacity of communities, families, an individuals to enhance their economic well-being and quality of life.										■			
Goal 6	Effectively marshal the resources and capabilities of ARS.											■	■	■
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service														
Goal 1	An agricultural production system that is highly competitive in the global economy.		■											
Goal 2	A safe, secure food and fiber system.					■								
Goal 3	A healthy, well-nourished population.			■			■							
Goal 4	Greater harmony between agriculture and the environment.							■	■					
Goal 5	Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for Americans.	■									■	■		
Goal 6	To assure the quality of the Federal investment in the decentralized, university-based, agricultural knowledge system.													■
Economic Research Service														
Goal 1	The agricultural production system is highly competitive in the global economy.	■	■											
Goal 2	The food production system is safe.					■								
Goal 3	The Nation's population is healthy and well-nourished.			■			■							
Goal 4	Agriculture and the environment are in harmony.							■	■					
Goal 5	Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for rural Americans.										■	■		
Goal 6	ERS' diverse capabilities and resources are effectively managed.													■

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
National Agricultural Statistics Service														
Goal 1	Promote an agricultural food and fiber system that is productive and highly competitive in the global economy.	■	■								■			
Goal 2	Promote a safe food system and a secure agricultural production system.					■								
Goal 3	Provide a healthy population through improved nutrition.					■								
Goal 4	Foster an agricultural system that protects natural resources and the environment.							■	■					
Goal 5	Increase the capacity of communities, families, and individuals to enhance their economic well-being and quality of life.	■	■								■			
Goal 6	Fully utilize the capabilities of a diverse workforce and available resources to provide top quality agricultural statistics and service.												■	■
Rural Development Mission Area														
Goal 1	Encourage the establishment and growth of rural businesses and cooperatives.										■	■		
Goal 2	Provide access to technical assistance, capital and credit for quality housing and modern, essential community facilities.										■	■		
Goal 3	Promote and provide access to capital and credit for the development and delivery of modern, affordable utility services.										■	■		
Goal 4	Provide information, technical assistance, and, when appropriate, leadership to rural areas, rural communities and cooperatives and provide to their leaders the capacity to design and carry out their own rural development initiatives.													
Goal 5	Develop the staff, systems, and infrastructure needed to ensure high quality delivery of programs to all rural residents.										■	■		

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
Offices		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Departmental Administration														
Goal 1	Facilitate the fair and equitable delivery of programs and services to USDA customers and employees, and promote early and effective alternative dispute resolution.													
Goal 2	Provide the best solutions to USDA's corporate administrative issues to support the efficient and timely delivery of Departmental programs and services.													
Goal 3	Ensure high quality services so that USDA missions have the space, facilities, mail and property services, personnel support and resources they need to deliver their programs in a timely and efficient manner. Provide quality services to the Office of the Secretary and other full-service customers of DA.													
National Appeals Division														
Goal 1	Conduct timely hearings and issue well-reasoned determinations, which correctly interpret applicable regulations.	■									■			
Goal 2	Improve management operations.												■	■
Office of Budget and Program Analysis														
Goal 1	Assist the Office of the Secretary and other policy officials in decision-making and policy implementation by providing objective information and analysis regarding the Department's programs and policies.													
Goal 2	Ensure the Department's budget is consistent with policy decisions and that resources are allocated to agencies consistent with priorities and applicable laws.													
Goal 3	Ensure the Department's legislative proposals and regulatory actions are analytically sound and consistent with Departmental and Administration policy.													
Goal 4	Build a more productive and diverse workforce.													
Goal 5	Improve OBPA's information management system.													
These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.														

These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.

These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
Office of the Chief Economist		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Goal 1	Assure the Secretary of Agriculture receives timely, independent and objective economic advice and analysis on critical Departmental program and policy issues.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Goal 2	Improve the U.S. agricultural economy by facilitating efficient price discovery in agricultural markets by coordinating the release of comprehensive, consistent, reliable, timely and objective USDA estimates, forecasts, and projections of commodity supply, demand, and prices.													
Goal 3	Ensure regulations affecting the public are based on sound, objective and appropriate risk assessments and economic analyses.													
Goal 4	Assemble a competent and diverse workforce that works together effectively.													
Goal 5	Provide a physical working environment that enables staff to efficiently fulfill their responsibilities.													
Office of the Chief Financial Officer														
Goal 1	Promote sound financial management through leadership, policy, and oversight.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Goal 2	Maintain an infrastructure to provide management with online real-time financial management information necessary for sound decision making.													
Goal 3	Provide superior cross-servicing for financial and administrative services to USDA and other Federal Government agencies.													
Office of the Chief Information Officer														
Goal 1	Customer service and operational support.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Goal 2	Capital Information Technology and Workforce Investments.													
Goal 3	Effective stewardship through enterprise program management.													
Goal 4	Develop, implement and maintain a secure and confidential information technology environment while protecting privacy.													

LINKING USDA GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO AGENCY GOALS		USDA Strategic Goals/Objectives												
Agency Goals, by Mission Area		GOAL 1		GOAL 2				GOAL 3			GOAL 4		GOAL 5	
Office of Communications		1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	4.1	4.2	5.1	5.2
Goal 1	Provide maximum support to the Department in the development of its programs and creating awareness among the American public about USDA's major initiatives and services.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Office of the General Counsel														
Goal 1	Provide effective legal services in a responsive manner to support USDA strategies and objectives.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Goal 2	Develop a more productive, diverse workforce.													
Office of Inspector General														
Goal 1	Promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of USDA programs and operations.	These goals provide support to all the USDA goals and objectives.												
Goal 2	Promote USDA's conformity with applicable principles, standards, and related requirements by fostering improvements in financial systems and financial reporting which will enhance the Department's fulfillment of its fiduciary responsibilities.													
Goal 3	Promote program integrity by detecting criminal activity involving programs and personnel.													





## Appendix D: USDA's Strategic Consultations

USDA regularly consults with external groups – from customers, to policy experts, to industry and consumer groups – about the effectiveness of its programs and needs for improvement. While many of these consultations were not conducted expressly for the purpose of this Strategic Plan,

they have had a deep influence on its goals, objectives, strategies and targets. Following are USDA strategic consultations in recent years listed with the goals they helped shape in this Strategic Plan.

### Consultations Related to Goal #1 (Objectives: Production Efficiency; Expand Trade Opportunities)

Date	Who	Purpose
October 1999	Trade groups and farmers with an interest in foreign food assistance. Kansas City, MO.	To hold a forum with farmers and trade groups to discuss plans and exchange ideas and strategies for improving export programs for foreign food assistance.
November 1998 and 1999	Members of the U.S. Agricultural Export Development Council (which includes farmers, ranchers, and foresters), State and regional representatives of agricultural trade groups. Baltimore, MD.	To discuss emerging issues and exchange information with private sector agricultural industry groups and State and regional officials on the state of affairs for U.S. food and agricultural trade and how to improve strategies to increase the U.S. share of the global agricultural market.
February 1998, 1999, and 2000	Farmers and ranchers; members of Congress; members of the media; industry representatives; State and regional representatives; consumer and environmental group representatives. Washington, D.C.	To provide an economic and trade outlook of the year ahead for U.S. agriculture, and to discuss and exchange ideas on issues facing America's farmers and rural residents.
February 2000	American Agriculture Movement representatives, including farmers, agriculture groups and trade groups. Oklahoma City, OK.	To discuss the future role of government in agriculture.
April 2000	Beginning farmers. Kansas City, MO.	To discuss government assistance opportunities for beginning farmers.
May 1998, 1999, and 2000	U.S. exporters and foreign buyers. Chicago, IL	To bring together foreign buyers and U.S. sellers of food and agricultural products to promote U.S. food and agricultural exports.
May 2000	American Cotton Shippers Association, including farmers, shippers, and trade representatives. San Francisco, CA.	To discuss strategies and future programs to promote the export of American cotton.
June 2000	Farm loan program stakeholders, including farm groups and producers. New Orleans, LA.	To discuss direction and plans for future farm loan programs.

**Consultations Related to Goal #1**  
**(Objectives: Production Efficiency; Expand Trade Opportunities)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
December 1998 to July 2000	The Agricultural Research Service held 28 workshops, which brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders (producers, processors, State and local officials, officials from other Federal agencies, and representatives of commodity and consumer organizations), research partners, and USDA scientists and program managers.	To identify problems and issues of concern to the customers and stakeholders of each Federal program that contributed to a strong farm economy and to help establish the research agenda for these programs. This process ensured that the Agricultural Research Service's work supports the productivity and competitiveness of American agriculture.
July 1998, 1999, and 2000	USDA field officers stationed around the world; U.S. agribusiness industry groups, various USDA and U.S. Government agencies. Washington, D.C.	To discuss emerging issues in agricultural trade and to exchange ideas on how to better accomplish USDA's objective of maintaining and expanding trade opportunities for U.S. products.
October 1999	North American Plant Protection Organization.	To discuss plant health standards and trade issues.
Annual/ Semiannual Bilateral meetings	USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and various foreign countries.	To discuss agricultural trade issues in order to reduce or eliminate trade barriers.
October 1998, 1999, and 2000	Animal producers, State and private veterinarians.	To discuss animal health issues in the U.S. and globally.
November 1998, 1999, and 2000	Producers of plant-related products/commodities, Mexican, Canadian, U.S. plant health scientists.	To discuss joint plant health concerns in North America.
May 1998, 1999, and 2000	Chief Veterinary Officers of World Trade Organization member countries.	To discuss animal health trade standards and issues.
October 1999 in Rome, Italy; next meeting scheduled for April 2001	International Plant Protection Convention.	To negotiate the development priority and approval of trade standards.
Monthly conference calls/Quarterly Meetings	Animal Agriculture Coalition; American Veterinary Medical Association; United States Animal Health Association; USDA (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service and Agricultural Research Service).	To guide development of the National Animal Health Emergency Management System.

**Consultations Related to Goal #1**  
**(Objectives: Production Efficiency; Expand Trade Opportunities)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Ongoing throughout the year	Various grain, livestock, meat, and poultry trade groups and associations.	To discuss matters and issues of mutual concern and expand market opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers.
Spring 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000	Producers, organic growers, processors, retailers, consumers, commodity groups, organizations, industry, environmentalists, public interest groups, rural America, cooperatives, community leadership groups, and academia. The meetings are held by the Agriculture Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, and are attended by officials from the Research, Education and Economics mission area.	To solicit input on critical agricultural research, extension, and education issues from a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the country.

**Consultations Related to Goal #2**  
**(Objectives: Food Assistance; Food Safety; Nutrition Research and Education)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
May 21, 1999	National Stakeholder Outreach Meeting: open to the public, Federal, State, and local partners, and others interested in domestic nutrition assistance programs.	To seek public reaction to proposed revision to FNS' strategic plan for nutrition assistance programs. The public was also invited to submit written comments via the FNS web site.
May through June 1999	FNS Regional Stakeholder Outreach Meetings: open to Federal, State, and local partners and others interested in domestic nutrition assistance programs.	To seek public reaction to proposed revision to FNS' strategic plan for nutrition assistance programs. Written comments were accepted from persons unable to attend.
October 1998 through December 1998	Open to the public; Federal, State, and local food safety partners; the regulated industry; academia; food safety advocates; and other interested parties.	To respond to questions and concerns about new food safety strategies and methods related to meat and poultry products. Meetings concerning small plants and USDA's new food safety inspection system were held in 18 cities across the country to provide information.
August 4, 1999	Senate Government Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management. Washington, D.C.	To discuss what U.S. Government agencies are doing to protect the Nation's food supply.

**Consultations Related to Goal #2****(Objectives: Food Assistance; Food Safety; Nutrition Research and Education)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Sept. 29-30, 1999	South American government and private industry trade officials; U.S. Government delegation consisting of officials from USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Santiago, Chile.	To discuss implementation of various aspects of the President's Food Safety Initiative and to solicit feedback from South American importers about this initiative.
November 9, 1999	Americas Food and Beverage Show, with wide variety of exporters, importers, and government officials from throughout the Western Hemisphere. Miami Beach, FL.	To discuss implementation of various aspects of the President's Food Safety Initiative and to solicit feedback from trade show participants.
October 1998 through January 2000	Open to the public; Federal, State and local food safety partners; the regulated industry; academia; food safety advocates; and other interested parties. Eight meetings were held in Sacramento, Chicago, Dallas, and several in Washington, D.C.	To share information about the National Food Initiative and to obtain feedback and input on the President's Food Safety Council's Food Safety Plan.
Between February 1999 and March 2000	The three workshops brought together a broad cross-section of customers, stakeholders (producers, processors, State and local officials, officials from other Federal agencies, and representatives of consumer organizations), research partners, and USDA scientists and program managers.	To identify problems and issues of concern to the customers and stakeholders of the Food Safety and Human Nutrition National Programs and to help establish the research agenda for each National Program. This process ensured the relevancy of the Agricultural Research Service's work in supporting the production, processing, transporting, and handling of safe and nutritious foods. The research also supports USDA, other Federal and State action and regulatory agencies, and industry efforts to promote the safety and nutritional quality of the U.S. food supply.
October 1998 through March 2000	Open to international food safety officials; the public; Federal, State and local food safety partners; the regulated industry; academia; food safety advocates; and other interested parties. Five meetings were held in Seattle, Orlando, and Washington, D.C.	To discuss international food hygiene, food safety training, and residues of veterinary drugs in foods.

**Consultations Related to Goal #2****(Objectives: Food Assistance; Food Safety; Nutrition Research and Education)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
December 1998 through April 2000	Open to the public; Federal, State and local food safety partners; the regulated industry; academia; food safety advocates; and other interested parties. Three meetings.	To provide information, gain feedback, and respond to questions and concerns about science-based inspection models to be used as guides for new food safety methods in regards to meat and poultry products.
October 1998 through June 2000	Aimed largely at academia and other public health officials through open to the public and other interested parties. Consisted of 14 largely scientific and technical conferences held in Washington, D.C.	To provide information and gain feedback on such topics as: E.coli risk assessment for ground beef; Australia's Meat Safety Enhancement Program; raw beef and E.coli; research planning; inspection equivalence activities; distribution inspection issues; listeria; and the egg food safety action plan.
1998 through 2000	Foreign government officials (e.g. Japan, Great Britain, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Philippines, Malaysia, Denmark, Ireland, and others).	To provide information on various aspects of regulatory food safety such as: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and its impact on inspection; import/export issues; food residues; biotechnology concerns; advice on building their own systems of inspection; global food safety standards; and advice on creating food safety standards and regulation development.

**Consultations Related to Goal #3****(Objectives: Natural Resources; Quality of Environment; Forests and Rangelands)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
October 1998	Series of roundtables with farmers, ranchers, and representatives from State and local governments and commodity and conservation organizations.	To gather input from participants and others on the effectiveness of the Environmental Quality and Incentives Program and gain suggestions for improvements in the program.
November 12, 1998 April 7, 1999 December 1999 February 23, 2000 April 6, 2000 June 22, 2000 June 29, 2000	Congressional staff briefing.	To share Forest Service information about the development of the Draft 2000 Strategic Plan Revision and receive input from Congressional staff.

**Consultations Related to Goal #3****(Objectives: Natural Resources; Quality of Environment; Forests and Rangelands)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
October 1999	Series of five regional forums on private land conservation with farmers, ranchers, and foresters; State and regional representatives of agricultural, environmental, consumer, and other groups and businesses, governors, and members of Congress.	To assess what new directions USDA should take to improve the Nation's environmental quality and the health of the American landscape.
December 7, 1999	National Summit on Private Land Conservation with elected officials, conservation leaders, and individuals representing private foundations, major corporations, and agricultural and environmental groups.	To begin a public-private dialogue to identify the key conservation issues the Nation faces in the new millennium and to begin the search for solutions to these challenges.
Strategy, 1999	Series of 11 Listening Sessions on Animal Feeding Operations with members of agricultural, environmental, consumer, and other groups and businesses, elected officials, and others.	To obtain input to finalize the draft USDA-EPA Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations called for in the Clean Water Action Plan.
November 1999 through January 2000	Forest Service outreach to the public and employees in relation to the Draft 2000 Strategic Plan Revision.	To request public and employee review and comment on the Draft 2000 Strategic Plan Revision.
October 1998 through February 2000	Public meetings in Los Angeles, CA; Albuquerque, NM; Portland, OR; Seattle, WA; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Denver, CO; Washington, D.C.	To solicit input to the Draft USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2000 Revision.
January 1998 and January 2000	The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) convened 16 workshops that brought together a broad cross-section of customers, stakeholders (producers, processors, State and local officials, officials from other Federal agencies, and representatives of commodity, environmental, and consumer organizations), research partners, and ARS scientists and program managers.	To identify problems and issues of concern to the customers and stakeholders of each National Program working in the areas of preserving natural resources and the environment, and promoting sustainable agriculture. These workshops helped to establish the research agenda for each National Program in this area. This process ensures the relevancy of the ARS research program in supporting a productive and competitive American agriculture that operates in harmony with the environment.

**Consultations Related to Goal #4**  
**(Objectives: Rural Communities; Technical Assistance; Credit Programs)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
October 27, 1997	Guaranteed lenders, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac.	To identify ideas for improving the delivery of the single-family housing guaranteed program.
May 11-12, 1998	Guaranteed lenders and Ginnie Mae.	To identify ways to ease the reporting burden on lenders while improving the accuracy of the reports.
February 8, 1999	Presidents of Tribal Colleges.	To develop implementation strategy for the MOU between USDA and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.
September 1995 to August 1999	Series of meetings with multi-Family Housing (MFH) borrowers, management agents, and tenant advocates.	To identify issues of concern and find ways to improve the effectiveness of the MFH program.
March 1999	MFH borrowers, developers, tenant advocates, and affordable housing professionals.	To develop strategies for financing the maintenance and remodeling required for the aging MFH projects housing low-income families and securing USDA's loan portfolio.
July and August 1999	Potential guaranteed lender.	Four regional meetings to discuss and obtain feedback on the guaranteed MFH program.
November 30, 1999	Community development stakeholders including Housing Assistance Council, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation.	To gather input on the implementation of the Rural Community Development Initiative.
February and March 2000	Industry and stakeholders interested in housing of migrant farmworkers.	To obtain feedback on the Farm Labor Housing Program.
June 16-17, 1999 July 20-21, 1999 November 17, 1999 March 8, 2000 April 4-5, 2000 June 6, 2000	Private sector lenders, both non-profit and for-profit.	To encourage the lenders to participate in the leveraged loan program and to gather ideas for its improvement.
Quarterly	Board members of the Council for Affordable Rural Housing.	To obtain, feedback on MFH program from the developers perspective.
Quarterly	Board of the National Association of Managers and Housing Authorities.	To obtain, feedback on MFH program from the customers perspective.

**Consultations Related to Goal #4****(Objectives: Rural Communities; Technical Assistance; Credit Programs)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Spring 1997 through March 2000	Almost all of the workshops cited above for ARS involved customers and stakeholders interested in rural development.	To identify ways ARS research could benefit rural communities, residents, and businesses.
May 1999 April 17, 2000 June 13-15, 2000	Private sector lenders, technical and management assistance contractors, grant organizations, Fannie Mae and Housing Assistance Council.	To promote and obtain feedback on the self-help housing program.

**Consultations Related to Goal #5****(Objectives: Ensure Civil Rights of Customers and Employees and Improved Productivity, Accountability, and Performance)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
March 2000	Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation's Spring Conference--Little Rock, Arkansas	To obtain feedback on the Department's civil rights and outreach efforts.
April 2000	Alabama Civil Rights Forum Montgomery, Alabama.	To obtain feedback on the Department's civil rights and outreach efforts.
April 2000	Mississippi Valley State Greenville, Mississippi.	To obtain feedback on the Department's civil rights and outreach efforts.
August 2000	Black Farmers Meeting Ahoskie, North Carolina.	To address concerns regarding settlement of lawsuit brought by Black farmers and the tobacco settlement.
June 2000	Kansas Black Farmers Association Leavenworth, Kansas.	To obtain feedback on the Department's civil rights and outreach efforts.
June 2000	Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman Addressed USDA Employees on Civil Rights 2000: A Continuing Journey.	To address the state of civil rights at USDA and give employees an opportunity to provide USDA leaders with comments and suggestions for improvement.
Annual	Industry analysts and information technology staff from other agencies.	To gain an understanding of the latest advancements in information technology and ways that government agencies can work together to use information technology effectively.



## Appendix E: Internal and External Coordination Toward Shared Priorities

With priorities that span from food safety to forestry to fighting hunger, the work of USDA often cuts across jurisdictional lines – both within USDA and among Federal agencies. The Department also works closely with a wide array of State, local, and private partners, who share USDA's goals and objectives. This chart, while not all-

inclusive, represents the primary partnerships – both within USDA and externally – that will enable USDA to reach the goals laid out in this Strategic Plan. Please note that for the purposes of this chart, it is assumed that all USDA Departmental Offices support virtually every Department goal and objective.

### USDA Goals and Objectives

### USDA Primary Agencies

### External Organizations

#### Goal 1: Expand economic and trade opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers.

Objective 1.1: Provide an effective safety net and promote a strong, sustainable U.S. farm economy.

FSA, RMA, NRCS, ARS, ERS, CSREES, APHIS, GIPSA, NRCS, NASS, RBS, AMS

Department of Justice, General Accounting Office, Office of Management and Budget, U.S. Customs Service, Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of Energy, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, State Departments of Agriculture, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Objective 1.2: Expand market opportunities for U.S. agriculture.

FAS, AMS, APHIS, GIPSA, ARS, CSREES, ERS, NASS, RBS

Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Department of Commerce, State Department, Department of the Treasury, Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, regional development banks, private industry trade groups, cooperators, State Departments of Agriculture, Department of Energy, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

#### Goal 2: Promote health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food.

Objective 2.1: Reduce hunger and improve nutrition among children and low-income people in the U.S.

FSA, FNS, CSREES, ERS, ARS

State, Territorial, Tribal, and local agencies involved in nutrition assistance program delivery, private sector firms, U.S. Agency for International Development, private non-profit voluntary organizations, Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency

Objective 2.2: Reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world.

FAS, CSREES, ERS, ARS, FSIS

State Department, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, regional development banks, private voluntary organizations, State Departments of Agriculture

**USDA Goals and Objectives**

**USDA Primary Agencies**

**External Organizations**

Objective 2.3: Protect the public health by significantly reducing the prevalence of foodborne hazards.

FAS, FSIS, APHIS, ARS, CSREES, ERS, NASS

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (HHS), National Institutes of Health (HHS), Food and Drug Administration (HHS), Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense

Objective 2.4: Improve public health through nutrition education, promotion, and research.

FAS, CNPP, AMS, ARS, CSREES, ERS, FNS, FSIS

Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, Universities engaged in nutrition research, Department of Defense

**Goal 3: Maintain and enhance the Nation's natural resources and environment.**

Objective 3.1: Maintain the productive capacity of the natural resource base for future generations.

NRCS, FS, FSA, APHIS, ARS, CSREES, ERS, NASS

Other government land management agencies, local conservation districts, State conservation agencies, State departments of forestry, State extension service, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, National Science Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development, Federal Highway Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of the Interior, Resource Conservation & Development Councils, Historically Black Colleges and Universities & Land Grant Colleges and Universities, Fish and Wildlife Service (DOI), Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation

Objective 3.2: Protect the quality of the environment.

FSA, APHIS, FS, NRCS, ARS, CSREES, ERS, NASS

Other government land management agencies, Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, National Science Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development, Federal Highway Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of the Interior, Resource Conservation & Development Councils, Historically Black Colleges and Universities & Land Grant Colleges and Universities, Fish and Wildlife Service (DOI), Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation

<b>USDA Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>USDA Primary Agencies</b>	<b>External Organizations</b>
Objective 3.3: Provide multiple benefits to people from the Nation's natural resources.	FS, NRCS, ARS, CSREES, ERS	Other government land management agencies, Department of Commerce/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs Service, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, National Science Foundation, U.S. Agency for International Development, Federal Highway Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Department of the Interior, Resource Conservation & Development Councils, Historically Black Colleges and Universities & Land Grant Colleges and Universities, Fish and Wildlife Service (DOI), Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation
<b>Goal 4: Enhance the capacity of all rural residents, communities, and businesses to prosper.</b>		
Objective 4.1: Expand job opportunities and improve the standard of living in rural communities.	NRCS, ARS, CSREES, ERS, NASS, RD mission area	Department of Commerce, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Energy, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Environmental Protection Agency
Objective 4.2: Ensure the neediest rural residents and communities have equal access to the USDA programs that will help them succeed.	FS, CSREES, ERS, RD mission area, ARS	Department of Commerce, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Energy, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Environmental Protection Agency
<b>Goal 5: Operate an efficient, effective and discrimination-free organization.</b>		
Objective 5.1: Ensure that USDA provides fair and equitable service to all customers and upholds the civil rights of its employees.	ALL	
Objective 5.2: Improve organizational productivity, accountability, and performance.	ALL	Department of the Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, General Accounting Office, Office of Personnel Management, General Services Administration, Joint Financial Management Improvement Program, President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, Chief Financial Officer Council, Chief Information Officer Council, Congress, National Performance Review, State Department